1216

Henry III

STEPHEN CHURCH

1272

PENGUIN MONARCHS

VISIT...

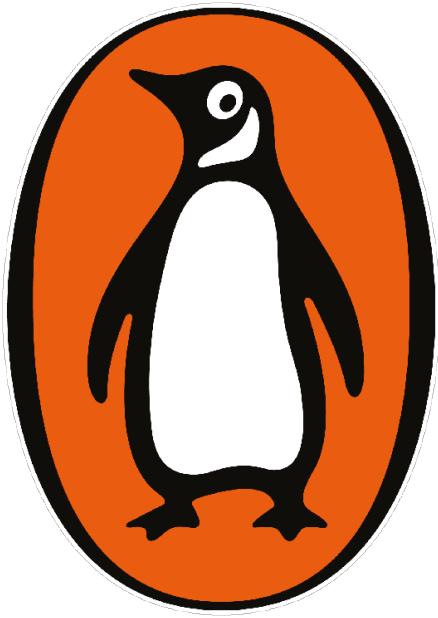
1216

Henry III

STEPHEN CHURCH

1272

PENGUIN MONARCHS



Stephen Church

HENRY III

A Simple and God-Fearing King

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About the Author

Stephen Church is Professor of Medieval History at the University of East Anglia and the author of *King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant*.

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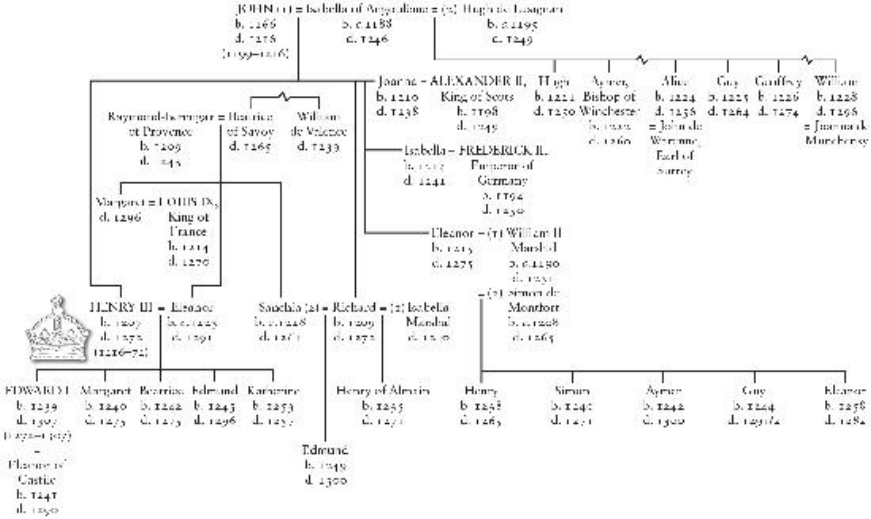
For Sam as he embarks on his journey

A Note on Statutes

Key pieces of thirteenth-century legal provision are often called ‘statutes’ in the literature and they were granted by the king. The king’s justices thereafter might improve on the laws, but they could not change them. The king himself likewise might move the law forward, but could not go against the law. Statutes were thus law which transcended the individual person of the king to become embedded in the fabric of English justice and society and they date from the reign of Henry III. They therefore mark a radical departure from what had gone before.

1225	Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest. These two charters were reissued six times in the thirteenth century (1235, 1237, 1253, 1265, 1297 and, finally, in 1300), a good reminder of how hard it was in practice to restrict the actions of medieval English kings, no matter what the theory
1236	Provisions of Merton
1258	Provisions of Oxford
1259	Provisions of Westminster
1266	Dictum of Kenilworth
1267	Statute of Marlborough (which incorporated most of the content of the Provisions of Westminster and added a further eight and a half new chapters)

The great bulk of the law of England was, however, unenacted; it was customary law.


JOHN (1) = Isabella of Angoulême = (2) Hugh de Lusignan
b. 1165
d. 1216
(1199–1216)
b. c.1188
d. 1246
b. c.1195
d. 1249
Joan m. – ALEXANDER II, King of Scots
b. 1210
d. 1238
b. 1198
d. 1249
Isabella – FREDERICK II, Emperor of Germany
b. 1214
d. 1241
b. 1194
d. 1250
Eleanor – (1) WILLIAM II Marshal
b. 1215
d. 1275
b. c.1180
d. 1231
– (2) Simon de Montfort
b. c.1208
d. 1265
Raymond-Berengar of Provence
b. 1209
d. 1245
Beatrice of Savoy
d. 1265
William de Valence
d. 1239
Margaret – LOUIS IX, King of France
d. 1296
b. 1214
d. 1270
HENRY III
b. 1207
d. 1272
(1216–72)
Eleanor
b. c.1223
d. 1291
Sanchia (2)
b. c.1228
d. 1261
Richard – (2) Isabella Marshal
b. 1209
d. 1272
d. 1240
Henry of Almain
b. 1235
d. 1271
Henry
b. 1235
d. 1265
Simon
b. 1240
d. 1271
Amice
b. 1242
d. 1300
Guy
b. 1244
d. 1291/2
Eleanor
b. 1258
d. 1282
Ralph
b. 1220
d. 1244
Alice
b. 1224
d. 1256
= John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey
Guy
b. 1225
d. 1264
Geoffrey
b. 1226
d. 1274
William
b. 1228
d. 1296
= Joanna de Munchensy
EDWARD I
b. 1239
d. 1307
(1272–1307)
– Eleanor of Castile
b. 1241
d. 1290
Margaret
b. 1240
d. 1275
Beatrice
b. 1242
d. 1275
Edmund
b. 1245
d. 1296
Katherine
b. 1253
d. 1257
Edmund
b. 1249
d. 1300

Picture Credits

1. Henry III as a baby, from Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum*, *c.*1250–59. British Library, London, MS Royal 14 C. VII, f. 90r (British Library/Bridgeman Images)
2. The sea battle off Sandwich, from Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, thirteenth century. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 16 II, f. 56r (Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge)
3. The Charter of the Forest, 1225. British Library, London, Add. Charter 24712 (British Library/Bridgeman Images)
4. The marriage of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence, from Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum*, *c.*1250–59. British Library, London, MS Royal 14 C. VIII, f. 124v (HIP/Alamy)
5. Edward receives Edith as his bride, from *The Life of Edward the Confessor*, English school, *c.*1255. Cambridge University Library, MS Ed.3.59, f. 11v (reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)
6. God's hand blessing the king's head, from Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum*, *c.*1250–59. British Library, London, MS Royal 14 C. VII, f. 128r (British Library/Bridgeman Images)
7. Dover Castle (Arcaid Images/Alamy)
8. Henry travelling to Brittany, from Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, thirteenth century. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 16, f. 79v (Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge)
9. Henry visiting Louis IX, from *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, French school, 1332–50. British Library, London, Royal 16 G. VI, f. 426r (British Library/Bridgeman Images)
10. Henry III long-cross gold coin, *c.*1257. British Museum, London, E.2135 (© Trustees of the British Museum)
11. Henry carries the Holy Blood and monks receive it, from Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, thirteenth century. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 16 II, f. 216r (Master and

Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge)

12. Edmund King of Sicily gold bulla, thirteenth century. British Museum, London, OA.3017 (© Trustees of the British Museum)
13. The Battle of Evesham and death of Simon de Montfort, from Matthew Paris, *Chronica Roffense*, early fourteenth century. British Library, London, Cotton Nero D. II, f. 177 (British Library/Bridgeman Images)
14. The burial of King Edward, from *The Life of Edward the Confessor*, English school, *c.*1255. Cambridge University Library, MS Ed.3.59, f. 29v (reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)
15. Tomb of Henry III and shrine of Edward the Confessor, Westminster Abbey, London (© Dean and Chapter of Westminster)
16. Tomb effigy of Henry III, Westminster Abbey, London (Angelo Hornak/Alamy)
17. Pictorial tiles, *c.*1255, from the pavement of the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey, London (© Dean and Chapter of Westminster)

Henry III

Henry III was the first King of England since Harold Godwinson (d. 1066) to be raised exclusively in the kingdom. All his immediate predecessors had enjoyed a period of their lives as continental princes, and although Henry claimed to be the Duke of Normandy, the Count of Anjou and the Duke of Aquitaine, these titles were relics of an earlier age. Henry had been born into the midst of crisis, at Winchester on 1 October 1207, when his father, King John, was embroiled in a battle with Pope Innocent III over the appointment to the archbishopric of Canterbury. King John had, moreover, already lost those continental lands to which his and Henry's titles called attention, and he was attempting to get them back. That John eventually failed in this task that he had set for himself directly brought about the calamity that led to the granting of the terms enshrined in Magna Carta. The Magna Carta crisis resulted in civil war and then a French invasion. It was during this assault on the kingdom that John died and Henry was catapulted into centre stage aged just nine.

INHERITANCE

As he lay on his deathbed, King John knew that he had left to his son an uncertain future. In his last testament, probably composed on the night that he died, 18 October 1216, John asked his executors to 'provide support for my sons towards obtaining and defending their inheritance'.[1] In the context of early thirteenth-century will-making, it was an extraordinary thing to put into a testament, and that John broke from normal practice gives us an indication of how distraught he felt about the prospects for his dynasty. Indeed, just days before, John had written to Pope Honorius III in despair, being 'detained', as he put it, 'by a serious and incurable illness, so much so that there is no hope at all for us … we, attentively and on bended knee, humbly ask you, father, that … you receive this kingdom and our heir under your protection for his succession into his paternal inheritance'.[2] In 1213, King John had resigned his kingdoms of England and Ireland into papal hands to receive them back again as papal fiefs. Honorius III was, therefore, entirely the right person to be Henry III's legal guardian.

The men who were to ensure the succession of John's nine-year-old son were led by the papal legate, Cardinal Guala. It was he who was the principal officiant at the coronation service that Henry underwent at Gloucester Abbey on 28 October 1216. The event was

unprecedented and its extraordinary nature can be gauged by comparing it to how a coronation should have been conducted. To begin with, Westminster Abbey had established itself as the coronation church of the English kings. It had enjoyed this status since 1066 and the Abbot of Westminster in 1216, William du Hommet, was most put out that Gloucester would usurp this privilege. The day of the coronation was irregular, too. It was conducted on a Friday, though coronations were conducted on Sundays unless there was a compelling reason for them to be held on another day. John's coronation had taken place on Ascension Day (which always falls on a Thursday), but that feast was of such religious significance that it had a higher status than any ordinary Sunday. The feast of Saints Simon and Jude (28 October) did not enjoy such a standing in the liturgical calendar. Henry's coronation was presided over by a cohort of bishops that did not include the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was at this point on the continent.[3] Although the chroniclers seem to have been confused about who actually placed the crown on Henry III's head, the king himself knew that it had been Guala, the papal legate.[4] This, too, was a break with tradition, as Prior Walter of Christ Church, Canterbury, pointed out. Ever since the mid 1170s, when Pope Alexander III issued the bull *Quanto Majorem*, the archbishops of Canterbury had enjoyed the exclusive right to crown the King of England.[5] But Honorius III had given Guala the plenitude of papal power to act as he thought right for the king and his kingdom. Prior Walter had been firmly put in his place.

There was a further extraordinary aspect to Henry III's coronation. No child had been crowned king in England for very nearly two hundred and forty years. The last time that a minor had ascended the throne had been when Æthelred *Unraed* (known to history as 'the Unready') had been crowned on 4 May 979. Child kings caused major problems for the English polity. As one contemporary put it when thinking about John's expedition to Ireland in 1185, 'we consider it a curse for any country to be ruled by a minor'.[6] Gerald of Wales, the author of these words, was alive in 1216 to see their wisdom worked out. With a child as king, who held the reins of power and on whose behalf did that person rule? No one in the English kingdom had yet addressed that problem, but they were going to have to do so now.

But why choose a boy-king and why have him crowned in such an unorthodox manner? The answer lies in the fact that there was a rival claimant to the throne, Louis of France, son of the formidable reigning monarch, Philip Augustus, who had stripped John of much of his continental inheritance. At that moment, Louis was besieging Dover Castle, he was in control of Westminster Abbey and, for all anyone knew, he might also have the support of the Archbishop of

Canterbury. Decisive action was essential; as the author of the *History of William Marshal* knew, and so made one of his characters say that Henry should be crowned 'the sooner the better, for upon my faith, there is no question of waiting; if we wait too long, we might end up with nothing'.[7] All knew that the moment of coronation mattered more than just symbolically. It stopped the possibility of Louis being crowned and it gave the regime the legitimacy it needed. With Henry as anointed monarch, those who were to form the backbone of the new regime could begin to rule (in so far as the situation allowed). Their first task was to remove from the invader his native supporters. Four days after his coronation, Henry took the cross: he was not only a ward of the pope, he was now also a crusader, putting him further under the protection of the Church.

THE REBIRTH OF MAGNA CARTA

The terms enshrined in Magna Carta had been conceded by King John on the field of Runnymede in June 1215. On 24 August that same year, Pope Innocent III annulled the agreement, declaring that its terms had been extracted by force and were therefore not binding in law. As a piece of legislation, therefore, Magna Carta 1215 had lasted just ten weeks, and as a means of bringing about peace between king and barons, it had been a crashing failure. Within weeks of its annulment, the king was laying siege to Rochester Castle and disposing of the rebels' lands as he saw fit, while the rebel barons had decided to unseat their king in favour of Louis of France. John's death and the accession of his nine-year-old son breathed into Magna Carta new life, this time not as a detailed complaint about a king's rule and a schedule by which his rule would be amended, but as a 'royalist manifesto'.[8]

The man at the helm of government was the long-time royal servant William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. A septuagenarian by October 1216, he had cultivated a reputation for loyalty to the Angevin cause, having served Henry II, Richard I and John. William was also a warrior of prowess, regarded by many (including himself) as one of the most capable knights of his generation. At this moment of deep crisis, therefore, he was widely seen as the only man with sufficient gravitas to lead the royalist government and to bring about peace and reconciliation. After the requisite show of reluctance, William took up the challenge, and in concert with the papal legate he made his next move the convening of a council at Bristol early in November. The first question was what his position should be. By 1 November, he had assumed the title of justiciar. The problem was, however, that there was already a justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, who had successfully defended Dover Castle against Louis's siege engines. Hubert was the

hero of the hour and when he arrived at the Bristol council, he made clear his displeasure at his seeming removal from office. A new form of address was invented for William Marshal, therefore. He was to be 'our ruler and ruler of our kingdom' ('rector noster et regni nostri'), a title (shortened by modern historians to 'regent') he adopted from 20 November onwards.

The fact that William felt that he could not assume the title of justiciar (or at least that he could not dismiss Hubert de Burgh from the role) is telling. The Angevin justiciar was second to the king, acting as his alter ego and the senior man in the kingdom when the king was absent. The post had been occupied by some formidable men and it made sense that William – as the principal authority in the land while the king was a minor – should hold that title. Right was on William's side, moreover, since all appointments to whatever secular post were made at the king's pleasure, and the king's death and the accession of his successor usually brought about a change in personnel, too. All new kings reserved the right not to reappoint their predecessor's officials. To prosecute those most associated with the old regime was an easy way to win popular acclaim, and most new kings could not resist the temptation to profit from the moment. So why did Hubert de Burgh imagine that his appointment as justiciar should continue after John's death? The answer seems to have been that, as far as Hubert was concerned, until Henry III was deemed to have come of age, he could not dismiss from their posts his father's servants. And, furthermore, those who now served him could not dismiss John's servants on behalf of the new king because they did not have the authority so to do.

We can observe the phenomenon of the restricted power of Henry's guardians in another context: the sealing of documents. Seals authenticated public and private deeds, and by the early thirteenth century men and women of varying status had a seal for the express purpose of validating the text of the parchment to which it was attached.[9] The Great Seal of the King of England authenticated his charters and his letters. He had two matrices for making seals – one held at the Exchequer and the other at the Chancery – which accompanied him on his travels. A special small seal was used for Chamber business.[10] All of these seals instilled in the minds of those who saw them, whether appended to a document or held in the hands of a living messenger, the confidence that the words were those of the king himself. And yet from the very first moment that the Minority government began to issue written instructions, it did so in the king's name but without his seal, using instead the following typical form of wording: 'these letters are sealed with the Earl Marshal's seal … because we do not yet have our seal'. Indeed, the very first letter

patent, dated 30 October 1216, was given under the authority of the seals of both William Marshal and Cardinal Guala, and that iconic document Magna Carta, when it was reissued in 1216 and again (with the Charter of the Forest) in 1217, was authorized by their seals.[11] In effect, therefore, William and those who helped him to govern were ruling without the royal mandate. The accepted norms of government were suspended until the king should be installed properly: sheriffs refused to be dismissed; castellans refused to hand over their castles to the Minority government's appointees; taxation remained unpaid; and homages to the king were withheld. In fact, even after Louis had been persuaded to vacate England in September 1217 it remained extremely difficult for William to bring about a peace within the kingdom, as people used the opportunity afforded by the confusion of a minority to pursue their own vendettas.

In November 1218, in an attempt to end this state whereby individuals could claim a legitimate basis for their resistance to the Minority government's orders, the king's council took the momentous step to create a Great Seal for Henry. It proved a wise decision, for it gave the Minority government greater prestige, and although Henry was not yet ruling for himself (in 1218 he was just eleven), it did mean that his government was issuing orders with his authority. The first enactment under the Great Seal were the rules that would govern its use, most importantly that nothing would be done by which the king would lose anything in perpetuity. Grants could only be made on a temporary basis until he came of age (whenever that would be). And at the same time the general eyre was reintroduced so that the king's justices could visit the English counties to dispense royal justice. It was this moment that marked the end of the first phase in the Minority government's struggle to bring order after the civil war of John's reign. It was just in time, too, for in early February 1219 William Marshal felt the chill hand of mortality and began his sharp and painful decline. On 9 April, he resigned his position as regent and, on 14 May, he died. So ended the life of one of the most remarkable men of the Middle Ages.

THE PROBLEM OF A MINORITY

During the reign of Henry III, the greatest men in the realm came of age at twenty-one (their female counterparts at fourteen). This was a vital moment in a man's life, because it meant that at this point he could, on the payment of a sum of money known as a 'relief', enter into his inheritance and enjoy the honour of holding his estates in full (hence 'magnates' held 'honours'). By that score, therefore, Henry should have been able to exercise unchecked authority from 1 October 1228, his twenty-first birthday; but the question of when Henry

should be deemed to have reached his majority was loaded with the weight of extraordinary political consequence. From the moment that Henry's majority was declared, royal officers could be replaced with impunity, and land and offices might be granted in perpetuity. If it was declared on 1 October 1221, Henry would have just turned fourteen. There was a precedent for a ruler coming of age at fourteen, in the person of Frederick II, ruler of Sicily, Henry's slightly older contemporary, born in 1194. Sicily, like England, was a papal fief, so Henry, like Frederick, could be declared of age when the pope, Henry's official guardian, decreed it. As the argument unfolded, however, the decision was eventually taken to delay the moment of Henry's majority until he was twenty-one. It meant that, in the spring of 1219, there was still a decade of minority government ahead.

The death of William Marshal threw matters into confusion. He had handed over the king and the kingdom to the new papal legate, Cardinal Pandulf, but not without the resistance of Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, who thought that he had been given custody of Henry by King John in 1216 and was determined to hold on to the role of king's keeper until Henry came of age. He had to be reprimanded by the legate on several occasions for his presumption in trying to control Henry; none the less, Peter retained custody of Henry's person until 1221. The justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, also believed that he should be involved closely in government. In a series of great councils held in the spring and early summer of 1219, therefore, these three men (Pandulf, Peter and Hubert) emerged as the leading figures in the Minority government. It was not an unproblematic group, with each man striving for dominance in the triumvirate and each, during the two and a half years that they worked together, enjoying moments of ascendancy. Yet while it lasted, the triumvirate continued the work of the regent in bringing about a recreation of the mechanisms of central government and the recovery of royal rights, and, as a symbol of that process, it was decided that there should be a second coronation of Henry III, on 17 May 1220. Henry's first coronation, at Gloucester Abbey, had been a far from satisfactory affair. This time the service would take place in the correct location (Westminster Abbey), it would be presided over by the correct officiant (the Archbishop of Canterbury) and it would happen on the correct day of the week (a Sunday). It was a grand occasion, at which the greatest in the land gathered to celebrate the moment of Henry's renewed elevation, and it marked a moment when the Minority government was beginning to get to grips with the difficulties that it faced. In some senses, it also marked one of the defining moments in Henry's life: though still a minor (aged just twelve) there was now a sense that he was emerging as a king in his

own right.

The problem for Henry in these years was that he was a pawn in the hands of men who were pursuing their own aggrandizement, as well as endeavouring to retain the favour of the boy who was being brought up under their control, so that, when he came of age, he might confirm for them and their families the riches that they had acquired. It was this desire that lay behind the determination of Peter des Roches to maintain control over the king's person, and which underpinned Hubert de Burgh's resolute hold on power. In the end, it was Hubert who would emerge from the triumvirate to dominate the king and the politics of the kingdom for the next twelve years. It was not until 1232 that he was forced from office, and then by the malfeasance of Peter des Roches. For a decade and a half, therefore, Henry was under the control of men who were careerist politicians, individuals who lacked the standing of William Marshal or the wisdom of Cardinals Guala and Pandulf (Guala's replacement as papal legate in the autumn of 1218) or the compassion of a mother to a son. Isabella of Angoulême, King John's widow and Henry's mother, had returned to her home country in 1217, presumably with the encouragement of Henry's guardians, who seem to have deliberately excluded her from the group that had custody of her eldest child. It must have been a source of great frustration to the queen, who would later show her mettle by carving out for herself a successful lordship, vastly expanded by her marriage, in 1220, to Hugh de Lusignan, the son of the man to whom she had been betrothed in 1200 when John had decided to take her in marriage.

We cannot know what impact the loss of his mother may have had on the young Henry. Modern historians have been critical of her actions, seeing them in terms of 'abandonment', but the medieval mindset was not the same as ours, and it is unwise to ascribe modern sensibilities to our medieval forebears, especially when it was perfectly normal for them to be brought up outside the nuclear family and within a broader familial network, which might include cousins and aunts and uncles living in far-flung places. The young Henry did have the guidance of men of distinction – Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, being one, for example – but he also lacked a principal guardian for whom he was not the subject of exploitation or sycophancy. This is something that we cannot overlook when we come to think about his formative years. His exact contemporary Louis IX of France was also to experience a period of minority rule.[12] To Louis's lasting advantage, his guardian was his mother, the remarkable Blanche of Castile, who ensured that Louis's interests were uppermost in her mind.

The end of the triumvirate came about because of the tensions between the three men, most notably between Hubert de Burgh and Peter des Roches. The latter clearly resented the former's rise to prominence in the group. Peter was Bishop of Winchester, the richest see in England. It gave him an unparalleled power base from which to pursue his interests, which he did assiduously. By 1220, he had become estranged from Pandulf and Hubert and, on 19 February 1221, the Exchequer audited his accounts as guardian of the king; the pressure on Bishop Peter forced him to withdraw from court, and by April he had left England, ostensibly to go on pilgrimage to the shrine of St James at Compostela. Rumours were rife concerning his loyalty, and the regime turned on his supporters and on others whose loyalty was deemed to be suspect, including Falkes de Bréauté and Peter de Maulay, two long-term servants of the crown. On 26 July 1221, Pandulf resigned from his legateship, leaving the justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, as the undisputed master of the king's affairs.

Henry III had emerged from Bishop Peter's tutelage perhaps as early as January 1221, not yet fourteen, but old enough to be considered by his contemporaries as no longer a child. As such, he might have expected to have a greater role in running his affairs, but it seems that he spent most of his time away from the centre of activity, where Hubert de Burgh managed the kingdom. It was Hubert, therefore, who drove forward the process of resuming the rights of the crown, and it was Hubert, therefore, who decided when Henry should emerge into the political spotlight. In June 1222, he took Henry on a tour of Wales, and it was at this time that Henry was first allowed to authorize his own writs (the letters by which the king's officers were instructed to carry out their duties) granting wine, wood and the products of the hunt. Henry was being taught how a king should dispense his patronage. It was not a major change in the location of political power, which still lay with Hubert, but it did mark the first recorded instance of Henry operating as a king.

Henry spent Christmas 1222 at Oxford and then came to Westminster where, in January 1223, he confirmed Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest, perhaps in response to an inquiry into the liberties of England in the time of Henry's grandfather, Henry II. The reconfirmation of these charters of liberties was forced by a widespread fear that the inquiry might result in 'a revival of the malpractices of King John's time' and reminds us that the charters had already become an integral part of the political landscape of England. The importance of the charters would never wane during Henry III's lifetime.

From 1223, Henry was regularly to be found in Hubert's company;

it was therefore at Hubert's side that the young king was learning the business that would one day be his to command. By the end of 1223, aged sixteen, Henry began to assume those regal powers. On 10 December, he took custody of the Great Seal, and from that moment on all matters of importance were attested not by the justiciar but by Henry. It was a significant moment in the transformation of the child into the adult king. Control of the Great Seal did not, however, mean that Henry ruled unfettered. He had still not reached his age of majority, twenty-one, and as such he was still unable to grant away anything permanently. And perhaps because of the skill with which Hubert had managed affairs during the previous years, especially during the year that the king was by his side, the justiciar remained Henry's chief minister. It is a remarkable testimony to Hubert's political acumen that he managed to hold on to power through one of the most dangerous phases in the development of the king. None the less, Hubert's influence did decline eventually, and Henry came more under the guidance of his archbishop, Stephen Langton, Jocelin, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Richard le Poore, Bishop of Salisbury. The heart of Henry's government had, from 1224, a more distinctly ecclesiastical flavour than it had previously. And because of Hubert's skill, at the beginning of 1224, Henry enjoyed more widespread support than at any other time before. For the first time in almost a decade, England was, to a great extent, united behind its king.

THE CHARTERS OF LIBERTIES[13]

In late 1224, the matter of Gascony was uppermost in the collective mind of the Minority government. Poitou had been irrevocably lost to the expansionist French monarchy, and the new French king, Louis VIII, who had led the invasion of England in 1216, had taken control of the county. Henry's regime was too concerned with matters in England to send the needed support, and so, eventually, the final bastion of resistance, the port of La Rochelle, fell. Though Poitou was lost, there was still hope that Henry would hold on to Gascony, so at a meeting of a great council in February 1225, the decision was made to send Henry's younger brother, Richard, aged sixteen, to the duchy. The money for the campaign was found by the levying of a tax of a fifteenth on movables. This was the sort of taxation that had been instituted by King John and which had caused such resentment among the English nobility that it was responsible in part for the rebellion against that king in 1215. But this time the tax had been granted by the magnates 'for the tranquillity and protection of the kingdom, and for the common defence and utility of all', rather than taken by the king. The magnates granted to Henry the taxation in return for the reissue of the charters of liberties, this time permanently and

irrevocably.

The granting of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest in February 1225 marked a watershed in the history of these two documents and of English government. As the new Magna Carta declared, in a radical departure from all previous versions of the text:

> In return for this grant and gift of these liberties and of the other liberties contained in our charter on the liberties of the forest, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, knights, freeholders, and all of our realm have given us a fifteenth part of all their movables. We have also granted to them from us and our heirs that neither we nor our heirs will procure anything whereby the liberties contained in this charter shall be infringed or weakened; and if anything contrary to this is procured from anyone, it shall avail nothing and be held for naught.

Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest now had the status of law. Moreover, an unbreakable link had been created between the concessions enshrined in the charters of liberties and the granting of taxation by the community of the realm. That community of the realm, furthermore, had now to be asked directly in a formal meeting, a great council, or, in French (the language of the aristocracy), a *parlement*. The granting of the charters of liberties, moreover, was undertaken by Henry's 'spontaneous free will'. Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest were, therefore, part of the contract freely entered into between king and all his subjects, for they were granted not to 'all the free men and women of our realm', as the 1215 charter had it, but to 'all of our realm'. The difference between the two is significant, for in the early thirteenth century three-fifths of the population was unfree. John's Magna Carta was intended for only a select group of free men and free women; Henry's charters of liberties took in the population of the whole kingdom. The charters were now enshrined as the foundational stones of English statute law, and henceforth they would be the documents by which the quality of Henry's rule would be judged and the banner around which his subjects would muster when they thought that the quality of the king's rule was wanting.

COMING OF AGE

The minority of Henry III was never officially declared at an end, but the events of 1225 made it clear to all that the king would now be the driving force in the day-to-day government of the realm. Certainly his hand was increasingly to be seen in governmental activity, and, by January 1227, when Henry was nineteen, it was resolved that he might make grants in perpetuity. The decision meant that he was now, in person as well as in name, the captain of the ship of state. There was a resulting feeding frenzy in which the king's ministers benefited

prodigiously from their long years of loyal service.[14] But despite declaring himself to be competent, as an adult, to dispense of his lands and rights, Henry did not immediately throw off the guidance of his justiciar. Indeed, now Earl of Kent, and richly rewarded by Henry with numerous other lands and honours, Hubert continued as chief minister until 1232 when, in what must be one of the more delicious ironies of Henry III's reign, his fall was engineered by none other than his former colleague in the triumvirate, Peter des Roches. By 1232, Hubert had become an isolated figure, whose long tenure of the justiciar's office had left him with fewer friends than enemies, and so, when Bishop Peter returned to England from crusade, he found Hubert vulnerable to attack; it was an opportunity that was too good to pass up, since Hubert had been responsible for Peter's removal from office. Despite a heroic defence of his position, Hubert was ousted from power by the end of July, and the bishop slipped neatly into his shoes, bringing with him a wholesale change in the administration. The destruction of the justiciar must have given much pleasure to many people. He and his wife, Margaret, had their lands confiscated and were hounded for two years until, in May 1234, Bishop Peter himself was driven from office and Hubert was pardoned by the king, being allowed to live out the remainder of his life in peace. From 1234 Henry took personal charge of his kingdom.

THE BIRTH OF PARLIAMENT

The greatest problem that Henry faced was that, after a long minority, his subjects had become used to a king who did not rule. By tradition, Angevin kings directed the energies of government as they willed it. A king's *vis et voluntas* (wish and will) were normal drivers of policy, and his *ira et malevolentia* (anger and ill will) were legitimate tools of rulership.[15] The king was set over his people to rule as God's anointed, and unction with holy oil 'made the body of the king inviolate'. To attack the king's person was beyond what most in twelfth- and thirteenth-century English society were prepared to do.[16] Criticizing the king and his rulership was one step below rebellion and therefore to question his rule risked incurring the king's *ira et malevolentia*, which could bring about personal ruin. It was not just the case of Archbishop Thomas Becket, murdered in his own cathedral in 1170, that people had in their minds when they thought of the dangers presented by the king. The most recent cause célèbre had been William de Briouze, who had been ruined by King John's *ira et malevolentia*, and whose wife and son had in 1210 been starved to death in one of John's dungeons.[17]

As a result, criticism of Angevin rulers was made quietly, for the most part, in trepidation and behind closed doors, but when Henry

began to rule in his own right in 1234, government had not been directed by the king's unfettered will for eighteen years. This was a long enough period for Henry's subjects to have become accustomed to a different tenor of rulership, one in which the king gave authority to the actions of his ministers, who enjoyed executive powers and who, in turn, had become answerable to a wider community of the realm. William Marshal had inaugurated a conciliar form of rule almost immediately after Henry's first coronation. That council, as we have seen, which met at Bristol, decided to reissue Magna Carta, shorn, to be sure, of its more obnoxious limitations on royal rule, but none the less retaining the key demand of the rebels, that the king govern according to the rule of law and the diktats of custom. But while the king was a minor, who was to say what was law and what was custom? It could not be left to the king's ministers, who were merely governing his kingdom while he was temporarily incapacitated by age. The answer came that the king's ministers had to be held to account by the senior members of the community of the realm. In the decade between 1216 and 1225, twenty-five great councils were called, plenty enough for the magnates to come to expect that their advice would be sought on matters of significance to the kingdom. The culmination of this form of conciliar government was reached in February 1225 with the reissue of the charters of liberties.

As a direct consequence of the long minority of Henry III, the idea had implanted itself in the consciousness of the English political elite that the king should take counsel in regularly held assemblies (great councils). Government by assembly was hardly a new idea,[18] but by the time of his majority, the power of the magnates to compel Henry III to hold assemblies had taken on the weight of custom. Now an English king might expect to receive counsel that he did not wish to hear, and the king who failed to take counsel on matters of great importance invited censure. Henry would be judged on his ability to operate within the confines of this new political reality.

FINDING A BRIDE

Royal marriages were matters of politics, and the fact that Henry remained unmarried as he was approaching thirty was a cause for concern. His three sisters, Joanna, Isabella and Eleanor, had all been married: Joanna to Alexander, King of Scots; Isabella to the Emperor Frederick II; and Eleanor to William II Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. The St Alban's chronicler, Matthew Paris, thought that Henry's chances of marriage might have been ruined by Hubert de Burgh, who, Matthew alleged, had made unhelpful comments about Henry's manhood.[19] But after Hubert's fall from power, Henry set about finding himself a suitable bride. There had been proposals to marry a daughter of

Leopold of Austria and then a daughter of Peter of Dreux, both of which had fallen through. It was later suggested that Henry should marry Joanna, heiress to the duchy of Ponthieu and the county of Aumale, but this match, too, failed to come to fruition. Then, by the end of June 1235, Henry seems to have made up his mind to marry Eleanor, the second daughter of Raymond-Berengar of Provence and of his wife, Beatrice of Savoy. (Eleanor's sister, Margaret, had married King Louis IX of France the previous year, in 1234.) The two were married at Canterbury Cathedral on 14 January 1236. Six days later, at Westminster Abbey, Eleanor was anointed as Henry's queen.

The business of marriage was in part the business of producing children, but since Eleanor was just twelve years old in 1236, that side of the contract would have to wait for an appropriate moment. Plantagenet queens were protected from the rigours of childbirth until they were deemed by their female guardians to be of sufficient maturity to cope.[20] The other side of the business of marriage revolved around politics. In Western Europe in the thirteenth century, kingdoms, duchies and counties were ruled by families who, by and large, saw the lands they controlled and the people over whom they governed as their private property: this was a world in which kingdoms and communities were deemed to be private estates, not yet public states. To be sure, notions of the realm as somehow belonging to a collective – a 'community of the realm', in which there were stakeholders with rights that had to be acknowledged – were emerging. These had been at the heart of the Magna Carta crisis in England and they were also at the heart of the development of parliament during Henry III's reign. But for the most part, kings ruled, and their subjects accepted their rule. In such circumstances, the marriage of one dynasty to another meant much more than the creation of offspring: it meant the creation of a new ruling family unit.

In the case of Eleanor of Provence, the family concerned was that of the house of Savoy, one of the most powerful dynasties of southern Europe and related to Eleanor through her mother, Beatrice of Savoy. Beatrice's brother, William of Savoy, bishop-elect of Valence, a man of extraordinary ability, played a key role in the negotiations for the marriage and accompanied the young bride to her new kingdom. Within four months of his arrival in England, William was head of Henry III's council, providing much-needed wisdom and stability. It was his exit from England in the spring of 1238 that brought about one of the major crises in Henry's reign. Eleanor also introduced into England Thomas, Count of Flanders, Peter and Boniface of Savoy, the latter of whom, in 1241, was elected Archbishop of Canterbury (though he did not assume the post in person until 1244). By July 1242, Henry's brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, had agreed to marry

Eleanor's sister, Sanchia of Provence. And it was not just at the highest level of society that the Savoyard influence could be discerned. With Eleanor's uncles and sister came many a lesser follower, including at least one illegitimate scion of the Savoyard dynasty, Bernard of Savoy, who became keeper of Windsor Castle in December 1241. At Windsor the royal children would be raised under the guidance of another Savoyard, Walter de Dya, along with the Englishman Hugh Giffard. The English polity was changed profoundly by the marriage of Henry III and Eleanor, in large part because Henry was a weak man who wore the imprint of the last person to sit on him; for much of the 1240s, therefore, it was Eleanor and her relations who dominated court life and were at the heart of the English political establishment.

A PLOT TO MURDER HENRY AND ELEANOR[21]

On the night of 13 May 1235, Henry Clement, a clerk of the justiciar of Ireland, was murdered at Westminster. What made the crime particularly noteworthy was that it was committed just outside the precincts of the palace, which, with Henry in residence, was under the protection of the king's peace. The act, therefore, violated that most sacred of spaces surrounding the king and which extended to a distance of twelve miles in any direction of the royal person. Henry was in shock at the deed – one that had involved a large body of armed men determined to murder Clement whatever the cost – and he demanded that the culprits be apprehended and punished. The chief suspect was the son of a former justiciar of Ireland, William Marsh, who, it was later testified, each day had sent his page boy ('quidam parvus nuntius … cum minutis butonibus' – that is, 'a boy in buttons'), to enquire as to the whereabouts of Henry Clement.[22] As far as William Marsh was concerned, Henry Clement was briefing against him at court so that his affairs were constantly impeded. William decided to take direct action to solve the problem and murdered Henry in cold blood. Afterwards, William and his accomplices fled to Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel from where they set about terrorizing the neighbouring lands and resisting all attempts to arrest them. For the next seven years, William Marsh and his piratical crew avoided the royal forces, preying on the merchant shipping that travelled between Ireland, England and the continent, capturing sailors and demanding and receiving considerable ransoms, despite efforts to bring them to justice.

William Marsh's most notorious subsequent attack was an attempt to murder Henry III and his new queen, Eleanor of Provence, in their beds on the night of 9 September 1238. The couple were at the royal hunting lodge at Woodstock where, in keeping with medieval marriage custom, they had separate chambers. Henry, perhaps feeling

amorous (Edward, their first child, would be born the following July), rather than being in his own chamber, had made his way to the queen's bed, so when the assassin climbed in through the chamber window with an unsheathed knife intending to kill Henry where he slept, he found the king's bed empty. In his confusion, the would-be murderer blundered about until the duty lady-in-waiting, Margaret Bisset, heard him and raised the alarm. The man was captured, tortured and eventually confessed that he had been sent by William Marsh to kill Henry and, if he could, kill Eleanor, too. If Henry had been shocked by the murder of Henry Clement, he was dumbfounded by the direct attack on his person and ordered further efforts to be made to lay hands on William Marsh. It was not, however, until 1242 that William Marsh was eventually captured, this time by a subterfuge that allowed the king's men to gain access to Lundy Island. When William Marsh was brought to trial in chains, the outcome was inevitable. On 25 July 1242, William, with sixteen companions, was dragged behind a horse to Tyburn, where justice was served. At this point in his text, the chronicler Matthew Paris drew a picture of the unhappy man meeting his fate, in case imagination should fail in his reader.

GASCONY AND POITOU, 1242–3

The grand enterprise of the early 1240s was to have been the recapture of Poitou. It was certainly Henry's hope to re-establish his family interests in the county that his father had lost in 1205 and failed to recover in 1214. Poitou was dominated by the Lusignan family and, by happy coincidence, Henry's own mother, Isabella of Angoulême, had in 1220 married the head of the family, Hugh, 'in Henry's interests', as she said in a letter explaining her decision.[23] The relationship between mother and son was not always easy, especially as Isabella, rather than supporting Henry, pursued policies pertinent to her own interests in La Marche, Angoulême and Lusignan, which, in 1224, for example, had seen Isabella and her husband firmly in the camp of the Capetian kings of France. The fall of La Rochelle to the French was a disaster which Henry long harboured a desire to reverse. During the 1230s, plans were made to muster a force to take to Poitou, but it was the wish of King Louis IX of France to invest his brother Alphonse as Count of Poitou (announced at the midsummer court in 1241) that proved the catalyst for action. The Poitevin lords had been enjoying their freedom from direct supervision and did not relish the prospect of the rulership of a new count backed by Capetian money. Within a short time, a number of key players were negotiating with Henry, most prominently Henry's stepfather, Hugh de Lusignan, who, with Isabella and their son and heir, also named Hugh, invited

Henry to bring his army south.

Henry, however, had to tread carefully in the corridors of power. His father had very nearly lost his kingdom as a result of a disastrous campaign in Poitou in 1214. King John had gone to the county without the support of his magnates and now Henry III was proposing to do likewise. If Henry were to fail, then his reputation would be diminished (no nation likes to follow an unsuccessful war leader). Then, as now, military campaigns were expensive and could not, generally, be sustained by ordinary revenue. Henry's predecessors used the levying of scutage (a tax paid in lieu of military service) on the landed resources of the nobility and the imposition of aids ('voluntary' payments made to support the king in special enterprises or to supplement scutage) to fund their military plans.[24] So successful had Henry II, Richard I and John been in levying scutage and aids at whim that this came to form one of the key complaints in the Magna Carta revolt of 1215. When Henry III reissued Magna Carta ten years later, scutage was to be 'taken as it used to be taken in the time of our grandfather, King Henry II', which in 1225 meant that it was not to be levied without counsel.[25]

From 1225 onwards, therefore, extraordinary taxation was to be given by the community of the realm, not taken from it. And in order to gain the consent of this community, the king had to summon them to a *parlement*, where matters of national importance could be discussed, including the levying of taxation. The word first appears in the mid 1230s to denote such a meeting, with the first (in these terms) official parliament taking place in January 1235.[26] In January 1242, Henry III was unable to persuade his parliament to grant him the aid he needed to launch his campaign in Poitou. When he left for Poitou in May that year, he did so with the criticisms of this parliament ringing in his ears: he had decided to travel to Poitou without their consent and, moreover, he was accused of attempting to rule contrary to the terms of Magna Carta. He therefore had to undertake the expedition with his own resources. It was an inauspicious start to a campaign that would have been challenging under the best of circumstances and the failure of which might lose Henry his kingdom. The king went to Poitou with a core of about two hundred household retainers (knights and sergeants), about £35,000 in his pocket, which he had raised from his own estates, and a lot of hope in his heart.

In the duchy of Aquitaine, where Henry was still duke, he expected to find widespread support for his enterprise. He had forgotten (or had not been advised), however, that Gascons had no love for Poitevins, and so when Henry turned northwards from Gascony to campaign in Poitou, his Gascon subjects melted away and played little part in the campaign. Henry, moreover, had failed to take into account that King

Louis and Count Alphonse would not be supine in the face of Henry's military pretensions, and they mustered their forces and put sustained pressure on the Poitevins to support the incoming count. Within a few short weeks of landing in Aquitaine, therefore, Henry had expended his budget and was quickly losing the support of his Poitevin magnates, most notably the Lusignans (including his mother). By August 1242, it was apparent that the mission was a fiasco, and for the remaining months of his time abroad, Henry was left to shore up the defences in the lands that he still possessed. For a full twelve months, Henry frittered away his time before, in September 1243, returning to England to face the consequences of his failure.

The reputational damage to Henry caused by the Poitevin adventure was great. He had acquired considerable debts, which although they did not cripple the royal finances, certainly left them in a parlous state. For the remainder of his life, Henry was to live a 'hand-to-mouth' existence as his expenses were never covered by sufficient income. In 1244, he faced another embarrassing situation. Strapped for cash, he had called a parliament to meet on 3 November to hear his plea for taxation as a result of the costs incurred in the Gascon campaign. The assembled magnates were unwilling to grant the king his wish and, furthermore, chastised him for wasting the money that had already been granted to him. They asked the king that they might choose his justiciar and his chancellor (the two greatest royal officers in the land), a request that he refused. It was at this point, according to the chronicler Matthew Paris, that the magnates placed before the king a constitution (the so-called 'Paper Constitution', because it seems not to have been enacted). This constitution planned to institute 'four men of rank' into the king's council whose duty it would be to oversee the king's expenditure, 'to do justice' to those in need of it and to be 'elected by the assent of all'.[27] It was a hint of things to come, and although Henry managed to duck this particular attempt to limit his powers, the events showed that, in the eyes of secular magnates and prelates alike, there was a mounting view that Henry was not fit for the job.[28]

THE LUSIGNANS

It was while in Gascony that Henry acquainted himself with his mother's new family, the Lusignans. It would be another five years before these Poitevin relations burst on the English political scene, but when they did they were to have a profound impact. By Henry's invitation, his half-brothers William de Valence and Geoffrey, Guy and Aymer de Lusignan, along with their sister Alice, joined the king's court in 1247. Each took full advantage of his or her opportunity and they formed a powerful faction that had the unstinting support of the

king. Henry, for example, used his influence to have Aymer promoted to a series of ecclesiastical livings, despite his reputed lack of learning. These promotions invited the criticism of many, but such matters seem not to have concerned Henry, who in the end managed to lever Aymer (unconsecrated because of his age, a mere twenty-two) into the bishopric of Winchester. In return, the Lusignans brought Henry powerful allies in a part of the world that he had yet to give up on. Though their influence in Poitou had been reduced by the imposition of Alphonse as count, they none the less provided Henry with a major source of support. Henry not only gave succour to his four half-brothers, but also to their followers and the men associated with them. In total, Henry kept on his payroll about seventy Poitevin knights, not all resident in England, admittedly, but they provided him with invaluable heft in the fulfilment of his Gascon and Poitevin ambitions and useful soldiers during his campaigns in the British Isles. Henry's support of his Lusignan half-brothers created another powerful faction at court, one that began to rival the Savoyards in Queen Eleanor's affinity. By the end of the 1240s, Henry was beginning to wriggle out from underneath Eleanor's thumb; the Lusignans were a vital part of his plan to free himself from the domination of his wife's kindred, though he achieved it at the expense of having to wear the shape of another court faction.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND HENRY III'S IMAGE OF HIMSELF

It was from 1245 that Henry lavished huge amounts of money on the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey. This was to be the king's greatest enterprise, turning the Romanesque abbey of his favourite saint, Edward the Confessor (completed in time for Edward's interment, according to the scene in the Bayeux Tapestry), into the High Gothic building that, in large part, remains today. By long tradition, Westminster was the coronation church of the English kings; Henry decided that it would now become his and his dynasty's mausoleum. It therefore had to rival both Reims (the French coronation church) and Saint-Denis (the French royal mausoleum). Henry might not be King Louis's equal in matters of war, but he would be in matters of style (the confusion of style with substance is a recurring theme in Henry's life). In fact, Henry sought to build a church the like of which had never been seen in England, which brought to these shores for the first time the High Gothic of northern France (with an English twist). The king spent around £50,000 on the project during the course of the building programme at a time when he was in severe financial difficulty from other calls on the royal purse.[29] Certainly there was concern expressed at the time that the king, battered by financial crises, might not finish his plans, but in the end he did. It is, therefore,

a testimony to the importance that Henry placed on the remodelling of the church in which he would await the end of Time.[30] But in 1245, the moment that he would take up his tenancy in the abbey church was in the future. What mattered more immediately to the king was the construction of a political centre that would show his world who Henry wanted to be.

The clearest example of what Henry was trying to achieve is to be found in the fabric of the Chapter House at Westminster Abbey. The community at Westminster was made up of monks following the Rule of St Benedict, written by St Benedict of Nursia around the year 540. The monks met each day in the Chapter House to hear a chapter (hence the name) of the Rule being read out and to receive, if necessary, chastisement for wrongs committed. Henry, in his rebuilding programme, was responsible for financing the Chapter House at Westminster, where he intended that, not just the monks should assemble together, but that he should meet with the representatives of his kingdom and address them as a king ought, from a place of unparalleled architectural majesty. That sense of majesty was projected in the decorations, which probably reflect Henry III's own choices. While the surviving wall paintings are from the fourteenth century, the decorated floor tiles are still those laid around the year 1255, and so are indicative of Henry's own scheme. There are, at the simple numerical level, sixty-two occasions on which the arms of the kings of England are represented by groups of four tiles. It has been suggested that the tiles were left over from the works being undertaken on the Palace of Westminster at the same time, which indicates a unity of design in both the abbey and the palace. The work is of the highest standard, designed to impress both in its quality and in its content. The impact of the royal arms in the floor of the Chapter House is obvious enough, but they were not the only tiles of note. Pictorial tiles of a king and queen (Henry and Eleanor?) in a court scene, and another collection of tiles with a hunting scene, are brought together by inscriptions, mostly lost to time and erosion, but some still readable, one of which appears to make reference directly to Henry as 'the friend of the Holy Trinity' ('HENRICUS SANCTI TRINITATIS AMICUS').[31] If Henry could not awe his subjects by his military achievements, he would do so by his use of a stage so impressive that men would take note. Indeed, as far as Matthew Paris was concerned, the building was 'incomparable'. It was here that the king would meet the representatives of his people (parliament). Westminster Abbey was designed as a political building to be part of a larger landscape that took in Henry's new palace as well as his new abbey.

The rebuilding of Westminster Abbey raises another question for us:

why did Henry III favour the cult of a relatively unimportant English monarch who was of relevance only to the monks of Westminster? Edward the Confessor was no warrior-king who had defended his people from invasion. Indeed, Edward's sanctity rested on his posthumous reputation for chastity and a few rather desultory miracles. But the monks of Westminster pursued with vigour the project of elevating their founder to the community of God's saints. They petitioned Rome for Edward's canonization in 1160, and this was granted on 7 February 1161. The cult, though, never had widespread support, and never seems to have attracted the pilgrimage following enjoyed by, to take the most popular example, St Thomas of Canterbury. The saint of choice for twelfth-century English kings interested in warrior exploits was the martyred St Edmund of East Anglia, who had some claim to being the patron saint of England until the mythical St George, another warrior-saint, took his place in the fourteenth century. In this collection of national saints, it is Edward who looks out of place. None the less, Henry maintained an interest in this cult from 1233 and he remained devoted to the Confessor for the remainder of his life.

The king was an assiduous attender at Mass, and in his daily rituals he showed great piety. He washed the feet of the poor and his charitable works were prodigious even by the standards of the day. He fed one hundred and fifty paupers a day (a hundred when the queen was absent from court), which was on a scale large enough to make a powerful statement about his commitment to his religious duty. So pious was he, indeed, that stories about the lengths to which he would go readily grew up around him, such as the one (taking the narrative forward in time for the moment) that involved Henry arriving late for each meeting of the *parlement* of Paris in 1259 because he insisted on visiting every church along his path to hear Mass. The story has a near-contemporary provenance, but whether it is true or not seems unimportant compared to the fact that people believed that it could be true. Henry III's piety was legendary even in his own day, which forces us to the conclusion that he saw his own life as that of a confessor of the faith.

The religious thread running through Henry's life is clear. In 1247, he gave to Westminster a relic of the Holy Blood of Christ, sent to him, so he is said to have announced, by the patriarch of Jerusalem. The blood of Christ was the holiest of relics, taken from his dying body at the point of crucifixion, and Henry saw his acquisition of it as a great coup. On 13 October (the feast of the translation of St Edward the Confessor), he led the celebrations, which included a solemn two-mile procession, with the king carrying the relic in his own hands, a ceremonial handing over of the relic in its crystal pyx to the

community at Westminster, and a personal assurance to the king from the chronicler Matthew Paris, an invited guest at the occasion, that he had recorded the events for the benefit of posterity. It would, perhaps, be cruel to imagine that many looked askance at the ceremony conducted so ostentatiously when few believed, and many said so openly, in the relic's authenticity. Two years later, in an equally controversial ceremony, Henry gave to Westminster a white marble stone in which was impressed the footmark of Christ and which was said to have been made 'at the very moment Our Lord ascended to heaven'. Henry's piety, out of kilter with the mainstream of his day and therefore susceptible to contemporary criticism, is also a recurring theme in his life.[32]

On 6 March 1250, Henry felt compelled to take the cross to become a crusader, despite his determination to be a witness to the faith rather than an active seeker after martyrdom. The fall of Jerusalem in 1244 to Muslim forces had brought a call for crusade from the papacy to which many rulers in Western Christendom had responded. In 1248, Henry's greatest rival and the man to whom he compared himself, King Louis IX of France, took the cross. By the summer of 1249, Louis was in Egypt winning renown for himself and his dynasty. Perhaps the French king's successes pressed heavily on Henry's conscience (though he would have heard of Louis's disastrous defeat and capture at Al Mansourah on 11 February 1250). Perhaps, too, the weight of family history troubled Henry's conscience. Most notably, of course, Henry's uncle, Richard I, had gone eastwards, and Henry had his chambers in a number of his royal palaces decorated to remind him of the exploits of the Lionhearted king. At Clarendon, for example, Henry ordered that his chamber be decorated with 'the story of Antioch and the duel of King Richard'. This was a reference to the single-armed combat supposedly undertaken by Richard against Saladin, the legend of which was repeated on glazed tiles laid on the floor of that same palace.[33] It was a striking image of individual courage to be chosen by the king who is at the centre of this book, because, unlike his famous uncle, Henry III was not noted for boldness when it came to his own personal safety.

GASCONY, 1253–4

Before he could go on crusade, Henry had to solve the problem of Gascony. Having led such a disastrous campaign in 1242–3, the king had left the duchy in the hands of a series of deputies. The most brutal of these was Simon de Montfort, whose activities brought howls of protest from the Gascons, who felt the full force of his rule. Simon's recall in 1252 to face trial for his actions resulted in further Gascon turmoil. Back in 1244, it had been the intention of Queen Eleanor

(and therefore of Henry) that Gascony should form a key part of the inheritance of their son, Edward, then aged five. In 1249, Edward was formally granted Gascony and the Isle of Oléron, and, in 1252, that grant was restated, this time with the proviso that the land should remain part of the inalienable property of the English crown. The impetus behind the grant seems to have been petitions from the Gascons for the removal of Simon de Montfort from office and his replacement by Edward. If it were part of lands of the English crown, it needed pacifying. With that in mind, on 1 July 1253, Henry remade his will, in which he left, in the event of his death, the kingdom and his heir in the hands of his wife, Eleanor, and proceeded to Portsmouth, where he waited a month before, on 6 August, embarking for Gascony. He arrived in Bordeaux on 24 August, remaining in the province for fifteen months, during which time he came to a peace with Alphonso of Castile (the kings of Castile had long harboured a claim to Gascony) which resulted in Edward's marriage to Alphonso's daughter, Eleanor (the young man had come to join his father in the duchy). The two were married at the convent of Las Huelgas, near Burgos, on 1 November 1254. The marriage represented the high point in Henry III's visit to his duchy. Henry then left Edward to cut his governmental teeth on the Gascon nobles while he returned home to attend to other matters that demanded his attention.

THE SICILIAN BUSINESS

In 1254, Henry was fast approaching the age at which his father had died. He had already lived longer than any of his uncles, and Angevin men, so History taught, did not live much beyond fifty. While in hindsight we know that Henry lived until 1272, in 1254 it could not have been evident that Henry had almost two decades yet to go. The king had made preparations for his immortal soul by beginning the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey; he had made preparations for his son and heir to enjoy the rulership of his own territory by giving him Gascony; but what was he to do about the future of his second son, Edmund? Then, in 1254, a new prospect opened up for giving Edmund a territory worthy of his rank: the kingdom of Sicily.

Sicily might seem like an odd kingdom for the son of an English king to have ambitions to rule, yet for aristocrats from northern Europe, Sicily had held an allure since the turn of the millennium. Norman knights making their way to and from the Holy Land had discovered in southern Italy a land full of opportunity for the courageous and, by 1100, their descendants had created for themselves independent lordships. In 1130, the ruler of these lands became a king, and during the twelfth century the kingdom of Sicily came to dominate the politics of the whole peninsula. The uniting of

Sicily and the German Empire through the marriage of Constance of Sicily and Henry VI of Germany meant that for the first half of the thirteenth century its ruler, Constance and Henry's son, Frederick II (d. 1250), was the leader of a superpower of such proportions that his very existence posed a threat to the pre-eminent religious leader in the west, the pope. The struggle between emperor and pope scarred the history of both institutions, so much so that Frederick's death prompted in Pope Innocent IV an outburst most unbecoming of a religious leader: 'let the heavens rejoice,' he wrote in January 1251 on hearing of Frederick's demise.[34] That the relationship between the two pillars of Western Christendom had sunk so low was a stain on the reputations of both parties.

Frederick's death did not bring matters to a close, however. Pope Innocent IV pursued Frederick's son and heir, Conrad IV, with the same vigour with which he had pursued his father. He looked to the ruling families of Western Christendom for a papal champion to take on the Hohenstaufen in southern Italy and Sicily. Perhaps as early as 1250 (in other words, before he had even heard of Frederick's death, news of which did not reach him until New Year 1251), Innocent was looking to Henry III's brother, Richard of Cornwall, as a prospective candidate for the kingdom. He, however, proved reluctant to take up the challenge. Innocent then turned his attention to Henry's second son, Edmund, aged just nine, who, by March 1254, had been confirmed by the pope as King of Sicily. All Henry III had to do to turn the designation into a reality was to raise an army, take it to southern Italy, defeat the incumbent, Frederick II's illegitimate son, Manfred of Lancia, pay the pope 2,000 ounces of gold annually as tribute and provide fifty knights a year for the papal army.

The fact that Henry was at this time conducting business in Gascony saved him from the immediate criticism of his magnates. When he returned to England, however, and sought backing for his actions, he was surprised to discover that the mood in England was less enthusiastic about the Sicilian affair than he had imagined it would be. The negotiations had been conducted in secret, and only in the autumn of 1255 were the terms announced in public. At the October parliament that year, the king revealed the conditions for Edmund's acquisition of Sicily, including the addition of a £90,000 fine to reimburse the papacy for its expenses in the matter. Only Henry III was surprised when the magnates refused to grant a tax, and even the king's own brother, Richard of Cornwall, could not be persuaded to support the plan, arguing that it had been concocted without his knowledge and without taking counsel from the baronage.[35]

The condemnation by Matthew Paris of the king's actions was severe. He prefaced his description of Henry's plans for his son

Edmund with a critique of Henry's policy of drawing 'foreigners' to his side and rewarding them prodigiously. Among those he singled out for attack were the king's half-brothers, the Lusignans, and the queen's relations, the Savoyards. The pope, too, came in for scathing criticism, since Matthew saw him as a key supporter of Henry's 'tyrannical rule' and the cause of the king's determination to bring England to ruin by embarking on an adventure that was certain to fail. Neither did it go unnoticed by the chronicler that Romans, like the king's relations, also benefited greatly from royal largesse. Matthew, therefore, told with some relish the story of the failure of the king to garner support from the autumn parliament and the irritation of the magnates as they returned home with the real business of the parliament incomplete.[36] One recent historian has made the valiant attempt to make us see the Sicilian venture as 'ambitious' rather than 'preposterous'.[37] It is an ingenious argument that no doubt reflects something of Henry's own thinking on the matter. The trouble is that, at the time, Henry's thinking on the matter was widely deemed to be flawed; worse, it was believed that he had been led astray by foreigners, particularly those from Rome by whose 'spell' Matthew suspected the king had become enchanted. To Matthew Paris, Henry was 'supine' and suffered from 'credulous simplicity'. Those speaking on behalf of the parliament that met in April and early May 1258 were minded to agree with that assessment and refused point-blank to fund the king's tilt at the Sicilian prize.[38]

THE CRISIS OF 1258

In the eyes of Matthew Paris, the crisis of 1258 was precipitated by the unreasonable demands for money made by Henry III so that he could realize his foolish plans for his son Edmund. In his account of the April parliament, it is the Sicilian affair that looms large. Henry had acted in an 'ill-advised and improper way', and it was the view of the magnates, according to Matthew, that Henry should 'bring the matter to the best conclusion he could, because he had acted imprudently and without taking the advice of his nobles, rejecting both deliberation and prudence'. The king's brother, Richard, was held up as an example of a 'wise' man who had spurned the opportunity to waste his wealth and energy on an adventure that was so far from the heart of his resources. This part of Matthew's account of the parliament is followed by a diatribe against the pope for the demands that he had made on Henry and then a report of the refusal of the parliament to grant an aid for Henry's Sicilian Business. Immediately following that entry in Matthew's work is an account of Henry's attempt to extract money directly from the monastic communities of England.[39] Only then does Matthew focus his writing on what modern

historians have come to see as the cause of the rift between king and magnates: the way in which he failed to adhere to the terms of Magna Carta and the way in which he exalted his half-brothers, the Lusignans, chief among whom was William de Valence, who had acquired the wealthy estates of the earldom of Pembroke when the Marshal male line died out.[40]

The revolt against Henry III came to revolve around not just the competence of the king but also the exclusion of the magnates from the decision-making process. The magnates argued that, as the king's natural advisers, it was wrong that they had been replaced in this vital role by Henry's closest friends, men who were, on the whole, outsiders to English aristocratic society. Henry, moreover, it was argued, lavished on these foreigners the fruits of royal patronage and, worse still, he protected them from the rigours of the law when they overreached themselves (which, it was claimed, they often did). The most significant of these non-natives were Henry's half-siblings, the Lusignans, who therefore drew the opprobrium of contemporaries and, in the end, provided the spark that ignited the revolt. The king had handled his patronage deplorably, illustrated most forcibly by the edict of November 1256 which stipulated that no sealed writ from the Chancery was to be raised against Richard of Cornwall, Richard of Gloucester, Peter of Savoy or against any of the Lusignans. It amounted to immunity from prosecution for the king's nearest and dearest.[41] Thus protected, the Lusignans in particular operated as though they were above the law, which in effect they were.

The reputation of the Lusignans for arrogance and violence pre-dated the edict of November 1256; indeed, it could be argued that the edict emerged out of a need to protect the king's half-brothers from the consequences of their vile actions. Their officers had the reputation of being ruthlessly grasping, and the brothers themselves were pugnacious in conflicts with other members of the king's court. They therefore epitomized the failure of the king's government to rule according to the charters of liberties. Immediately before the April parliament of 1258, in a way that had become all too usual, the servants of Aymer de Lusignan, bishop-elect of Winchester, attacked and imprisoned the servants of John fitz Geoffrey. John came to the April parliament to make his complaint, but the king 'did not wish to hear him and wholly denied him justice'.[42] The king had failed to act as an impartial judge (as he should have done according to the terms of Magna Carta) and John fitz Geoffrey was not the sort of man to take the refusal of justice lightly. Matters got worse when Aymer's brother William de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, began accusing certain English nobles of acting treacherously. In particular, William pointed the finger at the Earl of Gloucester, Richard de Clare, and the Earl of

Leicester, Simon de Montfort, whom he accused of helping the Welsh in the rebellion that was devastating William's Pembrokeshire lands. A physical confrontation was averted only by the actions of Henry, who placed his body between those of Simon and William.[43] On 12 April, a group of court magnates, including Simon de Montfort, Richard de Clare and John fitz Geoffrey, allied themselves with a formal memorandum recording an oath of mutual aid, and prepared to confront the Lusignans. In addition, this group was joined by Peter of Savoy, the leader of the queen's faction at court who had, until very recently, held sway over Henry's heir, the now eighteen-year-old Edward. This was a fight for the very soul of Henry's court.

For Henry, it was a woeful situation in which to find himself. He had tried to promote his Lusignan half-brothers as a counterweight to the power of the queen's faction. It was a valiant attempt to change the dynamic of the court, but his Lusignan half-brothers let him down badly by their witless behaviour; as a result, Henry not only alienated the Savoyards but also every right-thinking member of the court. The king and his half-siblings had by extraordinary folly created an anti-Henrician faction which counted among their number the queen and her Savoyards. Worse was to follow: after two weeks of tense discussions in which Henry audaciously put it to his barons that they should contribute to the cost of the Sicilian Business, the anti-Lusignan faction marched, fully armed, into the king's hall at Westminster to insist that he drive the hated Lusignans out of the country and agree to their demands. On 2 May, presumably out of fear for his life and for the stability of the realm, Henry III issued an open letter whereby he promised to submit himself to the barons so that they might 'reform the realm'. He further agreed that this reform should be conducted by a committee of twenty-four men, twelve already chosen by himself and the other twelve to be chosen by the 'leading men and magnates of our realm'.[44] The April parliament was prorogued for a month, perhaps to give the parties an opportunity to cool their tempers, but the barons were determined to press ahead with their reform. Sometime in May, they submitted to the king a petition in which were a series of articles dealing with matters of land tenure and service, the holding of castles, the problem of foreigners, the administration of the forests and of justice, the misuse of the king's prerogative rights, and the actions of his sheriffs and bailiffs.[45] These were demands designed to correct the abuses of the king and his officers, who, it was widely believed, had 'violated the conditions of Magna Carta so often redeemed from [Henry]' to the manifest detriment of his subjects.[46]

In June 1258, the parliament reconvened at Oxford, where a general oath of mutual aid was sworn by 'the community of England' to create an alliance to push forward the 'reform of the realm and to

redress the state of the realm',[47] after which a controlling council of fifteen was instituted, three of whose members would always be with Henry. Then a justiciar was appointed, Hugh Bigod, who swore to 'uphold right without fear or favour'. He was to have, moreover, the authority to 'put right wrongs done by others'.[48] A chancellor was chosen, who swore to place the king's seal on documents only 'on the consent of the majority of the council of fifteen', and he further swore that he would not seal anything 'contrary to the ordinances made by the twenty-four'. The treasurer, too, came under the control of the council. Thus, the three great officers of the kingdom by which government was effected were to be under baronial orders. Furthermore, it was determined that parliament should meet unfailingly three times a year in October, February and June.[49] It was a signal moment in Henry's reign for it meant that parliament was to have an established place in the English political landscape, no longer waiting the call of the king, but ready to meet at certain times to discuss matters of importance. It was, moreover, a humiliating defeat for the king, who was no longer master of his own kingdom: he could do nothing without the consent of the fifteen and was reduced to the status of a ward in his own realm. Henry, furthermore, had to face the ignominy of being unable to keep his Lusignan half-brothers at court. The threat of violence was enough to break both his resolve to keep them and their determination to stay. The Lusignans fled first to Winchester (perhaps accompanied by Edward, who had declined to submit to the demands of the barons) and then, sometime between 14 and 18 July, to the continent.[50]

SIMON DE MONTFORT

Simon de Montfort was a controversial figure in his own time and has continued to be so ever since. In popular culture, he is seen as the original driving force behind the creation of parliament, yet he was a complex character who pursued his own interests as well as representing the interests of a wider community of those discontented with Henry's rule. He was from a northern French magnate family but had been brought up in southern France because his father had led the crusade against the Cathars there. He had then come to England in 1230 to press his claim to the earldom of Leicester. He entered Henry's court in 1231 and gradually worked his way into royal favour, so much so that the reputation for imprudence and repression that was accreting to Henry's regime also stuck to Simon. In January 1238, Simon married Eleanor, Henry III's sister and the widow of William II Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. The wedding was brought about with Henry's connivance and without either the sanction of his magnates (who thought that they should have been consulted) or the permission

of the Church (Eleanor had made a vow of chastity after her first husband's death). Whether or not Simon seduced Eleanor (as Henry later claimed) is a moot point. What is certain is that Simon's actions made him serious enemies in the baronial elite and created a crisis at the heart of England's government.

Simon's relations with Henry were, thereafter, never uncomplicated. Simon was forced into exile in 1239, yet returned in 1242 to be at Henry's side during his campaign in Gascony. Henry would not settle a dowry on Eleanor, which kept Simon in a financially precarious position, and yet Simon returned to royal favour in England in 1243 and remained a staunch loyalist throughout the difficulties of the later 1240s. Simon was given control of Gascony in 1247, which he ruled with such brutality and high-handedness that he had been put on trial for his actions, though in the end he was not convicted by an ecclesiastical and secular magnate class who thought he had done no more than act as a loyal servant of the crown. So valuable was Simon that in 1253 he returned to Gascony with the king and helped to successfully bring the territory back under royal control. But Simon's relationship with Henry did not run smoothly even once they had been reconciled. Like most of his magnate colleagues, Simon was implacably opposed to the Sicilian Business and to the Lusignan faction at court. And something of the impact that Simon had on the king can perhaps be glimpsed in a story that Matthew Paris tells us about the events of July 1258. Henry, we are told, was on his barge sailing up the Thames, enjoying the summer weather while taking his dinner. All of a sudden a thunderstorm blew up and the king, who was fearful of them, ordered his barge to put in at the residence of the Bishop of Durham. There Simon was lodging and as soon as he heard that the king was present, he rushed to comfort him. On seeing Simon, according to the anecdote, the king is supposed to have said, 'I fear thunder and lightning beyond measure; but by God's head, I fear you more than all the thunder and lightning in the world.'[51] Matthew Paris would be dead before the full significance of this tale would be realized (he died in 1259), so perhaps these words, as reported by the chronicler, get us close to Henry's real feelings about Simon.

REFORM OF THE REALM

Although the path that had been set upon in May 1258 had been one started by a court faction, the spirit of reform caught the imagination of the wider part of the community of the realm. The document that emerged out of the parliament held at Oxford in June 1258, known as the Provisions of Oxford, outlined the reforms that were to be implemented by Henry, under the guidance of the new Council of Fifteen, with the charters of liberties providing the guiding principles

by which the council would make its decisions.[52] Inquiries were set up into the actions of sheriffs and others of the king's bailiffs, new keepers were appointed to the king's castles, to the Cinque Ports, and Hugh Bigod, as justiciar, was given control of the Tower of London. At Winchester, where the council reconvened after the Lusignans had fled into exile, Edward was persuaded to take the general oath of mutual aid and men of the baronial side were placed in his household; their task was to control him. The households of the king and the queen were purged of men whose loyalty to the baronial cause was suspect. Henry, at least in public, joined in the reforming spirit by agreeing to remove all but Englishmen from his service. It may well have been that, having lost his Lusignan half-brothers in the coup, he was seeking to have his wife's Savoyard relations suffer the same fate. If that was his plan, it failed, since Eleanor's relatives easily avoided the haymaker swung in their direction.

On Sunday 4 August 1258, the king and his council issued an open letter explaining to his subjects that a council had been set up 'for the profit of our realm and at the request of his magnates and at the petition of the community of our realm' and ordering them to obey the decrees of the council. The letter made it clear that not only the king but also his son and heir, Edward, sanctioned its contents.[53] The fact that the barons wanted both the support of the king and his heir is a reminder that the rebellion that was taking place was deeply loyal to the concept of kingship and of hereditary right in kingship, even if it was not loyal to the person of Henry III. The language of the letter in which the king and his son advertised the supreme position of the council was French, making it likely that its contents were to be read out at public meetings, such as at the shire court.[54] The revolution of 1258 was to reach beyond the royal court to the French-speaking county communities of thirteenth-century England. As part of the reforms, four knights were appointed in each county to investigate the wrongs committed by the king's officers and the justiciar, Hugh Bigod, began to hear complaints in the king's court. The evidence shows that many men and women turned to Hugh Bigod for redress, suggesting that a very great number of Henry's subjects thought that they had been the victims of miscarriages of justice. First on the list of complaints to be dealt with was the one raised by John fitz Geoffrey against the bishop-elect of Winchester. It had been the event that had galvanized the revolt, and so, understandably, it became the first case to be dealt with by Hugh Bigod. More grievously, the justiciar had to deal with cases such as that of William of Ryston, the bailiff of the king's estates in Woodstock, for torturing a man to death, for hanging a woman with no just cause and for making profit out of the king's park.[55] We might like to think of Henry III as a gentle and pious king

(an image he wanted us to see), but many of those who suffered under the rule of his local officials had a different perspective on their monarch.

PEACE WITH FRANCE

The principal driving force behind the baronial plan of reform was Simon de Montfort and the earl therefore took a leading role in the key diplomatic business of the day, which was the establishment of a peace between England and France. As early as 28 May 1258, Simon had had a clause inserted in the initial document that set out the details of the peace between Henry and Louis, stating that the money that the King of France was to pay to Henry could be used 'only by the view of upstanding men of the land, elected by the king of England and the high men of the land'.[56] It was inserted by the direct intervention of Simon and shows that by that date, therefore, he at least already knew that a council was to be set up which would revolutionize English government by removing the king's freedom to act independently. As soon as the Council of Fifteen began to issue letters in July 1258, it did so with Simon's name first, before even that of the Earl of Gloucester, his feudal superior.[57] Simon's absence in Paris while he led negotiations for the treaty, 'to the wonder of many', between November 1258 and February 1259 caused confusion among the baronial reformers.[58] Evidently from the very beginning Simon's presence was deemed crucial to the security of those who had joined forces to reform the kingdom.[59]

The immediate cause of the baronial fear was the stated desire of the king's brother, Richard of Cornwall, to return to England, for what they dreaded most was that Richard would find common cause with Henry and bring the plan of reform to a shuddering halt. The barons had good reason to be wary of Richard, not just because he had the reputation of being a trickster who had failed to warrant the trust placed in him during earlier bouts of reforming zeal, but because now he was also King of Germany with the resources to hand that would make him a formidable opponent of the barons should he take his brother's side.[60] Richard had provided much of the backbone to Henry's regime both in finance and in browbeating any serious opposition into compliance. Putting the Sicilian Business aside (which even Richard had deemed foolhardy in the extreme), Henry's brother had proved a constant source of support until his attention became consumed by a determination to become King of Germany. He and his wife, Sanchia of Provence, were crowned king and queen at Aachen on Ascension Day 1258 (17 May). By an extraordinary coincidence, Richard's elevation occurred almost simultaneously with Henry's demotion to the status of puppet king.

As it turned out, the barons need not have worried about Richard, since in 1259 his priority lay elsewhere. By long tradition, the King of Germany, after his election and then coronation at Aachen, was expected to go south to Rome to receive enthronement as King of the Romans and then to be elevated to the status of emperor. But he could not ascend to the imperial dignity alone. The pope retained the sole authority both to choose the emperor and to perform the coronation ceremony. Richard had a greater problem than negotiating with the pope, which was that he had a rival for the imperial dignity. If Richard were to receive imperial coronation, he needed the support of other European potentates, one of whom was King Louis IX of France. Richard's interests, therefore, were the same as those of Simon de Montfort; Richard's political desires equally coincided with those of Henry III, who needed a peace treaty with the King of France in order to pursue his plan to take Sicily, which was still, amazingly, high on the list of the king's priorities. Peace with France was therefore one of the principal aims on which all could agree. Meanwhile, in England reform continued, and at the October meeting of parliament the 'community of the bachelors of England' protested that 'the barons had yet to do anything for the common good, as they had promised'. These bachelors were the knights of the shire who had been summoned to parliament, and who had addressed their complaint to Henry's son, the Lord Edward.[61] This protestation seems to have given impetus to the Provisions of Westminster of November 1259 whereby legislation was enacted to drive the reforms further into local society.[62]

THE TREATY OF PARIS

Like modern treaties, the hard work of negotiation for the Treaty of Paris had been undertaken beforehand and the two kings would not meet until all the details were agreed. Hence the Treaty of Paris is dated to October 1259, though its final form was not ratified until December. The key to the agreement was the renunciation of all claims to the continental lands lost by King John, Henry's father. Once Henry, his brother, Richard, and Henry's children (as well as Simon de Montfort's wife, Eleanor, in return for a suitable financial settlement) had renounced their claims to Normandy, Anjou, Touraine, Maine and Poitou, Henry and Louis could meet to ratify the agreement. The personal presence of Henry in Paris was required for the second element of the treaty. Henry was to acknowledge that he held Aquitaine 'from the kingdom of France', which meant that he would have to perform in person homage for the duchy.[63] Homage was the act of handing over oneself to one's lord and receiving from him lands and rights in return for service. Henceforth, Henry would be a baron

of the French court subject to the *parlement* of Paris and the men of Aquitaine could appeal to Louis against him should they see the need. Henry had given up a great deal, and contemporaries noticed and criticized him for it. But to Henry the Sicilian Business made the concessions worth it.

On 13 November 1259, Henry and Eleanor, along with key members of the Council of Fifteen, crossed from Dover to Wissant.[64] It was a magnificent ensemble, deliberately designed to impress the French with both the size of the accompanying entourage as well as its opulence. If Henry was going to concede so much, he was going to do it in a style that belied both his financial difficulties and his current state of political impotence. Henry and Louis met first on 24 November; on 25 November, Henry was welcomed to the French royal mausoleum of Saint-Denis, and on 26 November he entered Paris. For the next week, Henry, Eleanor and the royal household were lodged at Louis's palace on the Île de la Cité where Henry and his wife might take in the views of the recently completed Sainte-Chapelle displaying the latest French architectural and artistic innovations. He then moved to Saint-Germain-des-Prés outside the walls of Paris, where he could host his own banquets. It was on 30 November that the week-long celebrations for the treaty began. On 4 December, in an apple orchard belonging to the King of France, the Archbishop of Rouen read out the treaty to the assembled throng and then Henry performed homage to King Louis. With that act, Aquitaine and Henry were now subject to the French king, and the fact that it was overseen by the Archbishop of Rouen, whose diocese was coterminous with the bounds of Normandy, also had symbolic meaning at the moment that Duke Henry gave up his 350-year-old claim to the duchy. Henry and Louis hosted a great feast on Saturday 6 December to which not just the great and the good were invited but also a hundred and fifty paupers (the number Henry usually supported when accompanied by his wife). Henry made provision for bread to be distributed to others of the Parisian needy. At the feast, the two kings sat side by side discussing we know not what, though we might surmise that Henry's difficulties at home was one of the topics of conversation.

Henry's stay in France was an extended one. By Christmas, the king had overspent in his determination to play his part as a wealthy monarch. Embarrassingly, he had to take a loan from the Templars in Paris. But his decision to remain in France was prompted by the impending marriage of his daughter, Beatrice, to John, the heir to the duchy of Brittany. That meant that Henry was in France when Louis's eldest son, named after his father, died, aged just fifteen. On 14 January, Henry took his turn to carry the bier through the streets of Paris to Saint-Denis where Louis the Younger was to be buried with

his ancestors.[65] On 22 January, the two kings and their wives were present at the nuptials of Beatrice and John of Brittany. But in many ways it was a hollow celebration, for Simon de Montfort had left for England in December without taking leave of the king and there began to foment trouble. Henry, therefore, was forced to remain in France until April because he felt the need to gather about himself a considerable force of mercenaries who would add weight to his homecoming in a situation where the leaders of reform, and most especially Simon, were seen as a considerable threat to the king's own safety. Even the king's heir, Edward, seemed to be conspiring against his father. In October 1259, Edward had sworn an oath to Simon in which he had promised 'not to make war on anyone' involved in the reform movement and to 'do justice and accept justice'.[66] Edward was making a play to remove himself from the tutelage of his father and, since he was certainly opposed to the terms of the Treaty of Paris, it is quite possible that he was examining the possibility that his father's rule might be forced to come to an early and (in the minds of some) timely end.[67]

HENRY'S RETURN TO ENGLAND, APRIL 1260

On 28 March 1260, Henry wrote to the Earl of Gloucester claiming that he had been suffering from tertian fever (*febre terciana*), the symptoms of which are a violent pyrexia that recurs every third day and which, in modern medical textbooks, is associated with malaria. Henry claimed that it was this which had delayed his return to England. Perhaps Henry was ill, but King Louis clearly thought that Henry had been deliberately avoiding his obligations in England. Louis visited Henry at Saint-Omer between 27 March and 1 April where he took the opportunity to upbraid the wayward king for the 'shame' and 'harm' that his absence from his kingdom caused him.[68] Stung into action by these words, Henry ordered the justiciar to prepare for his arrival, though it took another three weeks for the king to make landfall.

Henry's caution in returning to England was, in the circumstances, wise. He had refused permission for the February parliament to meet even though its meeting was legislated for by the Provisions of Oxford. He also issued in his absence orders banning the April parliament. As a precaution against the barons ignoring his order, he summoned the feudal levy to muster at London on 25 April. And, as an indication of the personal trepidation that he felt, he ordered that bowmen from Kent meet him at Dover to provide him with an armed escort to protect his person.[69] But the opposition party was in the process of disintegrating.

How had Henry been able to affect such a change in fortunes during

his absence in France? The answer seems to be that the baronial side was capitulating in the face of overwhelming military might. Henry, moreover, having been 'reinvigorated' by the air of France, was newly determined to bring the matter to a conclusion.[70] Energized to stand up to the council, to his son Edward and to Simon de Montfort, Henry denounced the earl to his baronage as a man willing to wage war on the people of England, and he proclaimed his intention to rule again as supreme in his kingdom. There was a tense stand-off between the king and his two principal opponents before Edward, chastened by the experience of his father standing up to him, submitted to Henry. Simon, bereft of support, was now vulnerable to the charges of disloyalty that Henry wanted to lay before him. On 8 July 1260, in full parliament held at Oxford, legal proceedings were instituted against him.

Although he was facing a trial for his actions, the earl brilliantly turned the occasion to his advantage. An extraordinarily charismatic individual, Simon was able to demonstrate when he appeared before the court that, far from being disloyal, he was being supremely loyal to the kingdom and to the idea of a monarchy constrained by the rule of law. In doing so, Simon won back the support of many of his peers and demonstrated once again the level of Henry III's incompetence.[71] When, during the parliament, the Welsh opened hostilities, Simon's military knowledge was in demand. The king prorogued the trial, and Simon was free to go to Chester to lead the army that had gathered there. By October 1260, therefore, by dint of brilliant rhetoric and indispensable military skills, Simon was once again in the ascendancy. Henry had thrown away his advantage and at that month's parliament the earl was able to impose his own candidates on the key positions within royal government: the new justiciar was to be Hugh Despenser, the new chancellor Nicholas of Ely, and the new treasurer John de Caux. Each man owed his rise to Simon, and each man had a strong connection to the Lord Edward. Evidently Henry's son had not given up entirely his connections to Simon nor, perhaps, his hope of bringing about an early ascension to the throne for himself. Remarkably, too, Simon had built bridges with Richard de Clare, the Earl of Gloucester, until that point an implacable opponent. Perhaps the experience of campaigning together in Wales had won over the aged earl to Simon's side. No one but the king, it seems, was immune to Simon's charms.

Henry's predicament was summed up in a ceremony that took place in his chamber at Westminster on 18 October. The chamber was the king's most private room, in which he slept, where he kept safe his valuables and where he met with his closest of confidants. Here, in the presence of the king, the Lord Edward, the Archbishop of Canterbury,

John Mansel and Robert Walerand, the silver matrix for Henry III's old seal, which had proclaimed him to be 'By the Grace of God King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou', was broken into pieces and given to Robert Walerand to be distributed to the mendicant poor.[72] The new seal, showing Henry shorn of his titles to Normandy and Anjou, was handed over to the chancellor appointed by the council.[73] Henry had lost control of government and had symbolically recognized the permanent relinquishment of his claim to those continental lands conceded to King Louis in the Treaty of Paris.

The situation that faced Henry was fluid, and he proved incapable of keeping up with a fast-changing political landscape. Despite his successes in the spring of 1260, by autumn 1260 the king was outmanoeuvred and Simon was back in the council and at the heart of power. To modern historians, the changes in Henry's fortunes during 1260 have proven bewilderingly complex and resolutely resistant to easy explanation. It may well have been that Henry himself was as dazed by the rapidity with which his fortunes that year first waxed and then waned. In November and December 1260, the king was firmly back under the control of Simon and the Council of Fifteen.

HENRY ESCAPES TO THE TOWER

In January 1261, Henry began to put into operation a new plan to escape from the clutches of the council. He was prompted, perhaps, by the absence of both Simon and Edward from England, the former at Louis's court pursuing his personal complaint against Henry and seeking Louis's arbitration, the latter in Gascony where he was further establishing himself as ruler of the territory.[74] Henry secretly sent messengers to the pope soliciting his support for his plan to overthrow the council. Then, on 9 February, in a dramatic step, Henry fled to the Tower of London. It was a move that must have made clear to the council the king's intention to defy them. The Tower was a formidable fortress that had never been taken by force. It was here that Henry proposed to hold that February's parliament and, when it convened, it was in the grounds of the Tower that he declaimed against the members of the council for their failure to resolve his financial position and to promote the Sicilian Business, the way in which they had profited from office and, most importantly of all, the way in which they treated him as though he were still a minor.[75] In essence, Henry accused the council of usurping his position. The pope took Henry's part and, on 13 April, Alexander IV issued letters quashing the Provisions of Oxford in which he stated that he was 'astonished' to learn what had happened 'to the diminution and depression of the royal power and liberty' and further stated that 'the king … is not to

be constrained by the machinations of any persons … and [that all were] to cleave faithfully to their king as their lord and to obey him'.[76]

Henry remained in the Tower until 22 April (Good Friday), moving to St Paul's where he spent Easter Sunday. By that time, Henry's Lusignan relations had begun to return to England, the most powerful statement yet that Henry intended to take the conflict to his barons. On 2 May, the king was at Dover dismissing Hugh Despenser, the new justiciar, from his position as keeper of the castle and warden of the Cinque Ports. Dover was 'the key to England', according to Hubert de Burgh, who had held it against the French invasion in 1216, and Henry intended to have that key in royalist hands. He placed in charge of Dover and the Cinque Ports the court clerk Robert Walerand. All this was in preparation for the arrival of foreign troops recruited to add further military muscle to the king's cause. The pope's letters absolving Henry from his oath arrived in England shortly before 16 May (even a messenger travelling post-haste from Rome took a month to reach Calais),[77] whereupon John Mansel was given custody of the Tower, a position normally belonging to the justiciar in right of his office.[78] And by this point in time, it is clear that Edward had returned to his father's side. It was a move that robbed the barons of the potential for legitimacy (no one could yet imagine a republican ideal of a polity without a king, despite – or perhaps because of – the example of the Roman Republic), and it simultaneously threw the baronial party into disarray and gave the king the courage to push forwards with his plans to completely overthrow the Provisions of Oxford and restore himself to (in his view and in the view of other royalists, including the pope) his rightful place in the political hierarchy of the kingdom. Henry removed the justiciar, chancellor and treasurer, putting in place his own men, and he declared his intention to rule unencumbered by either the Provisions of Oxford or by the council.

The negative reaction of the barons to his proclamation sent Henry scuttling back to the Tower, where he stayed from 22 June until 30 July. He dismissed all twenty-two sheriffs who had been appointed by the council and imposed his own men. This meant that the county castles would also be in the hands of the king's officers. What had started as a gradual gaining of ground on the part of the king was rapidly turning into a rout of the opposition party. When it came down to it, the barons were as yet unwilling to confront their king in open war. And neither were the ordinary knights of the shire as yet prepared to face down Henry: when Simon and his allies called them to a meeting at St Albans, 'to treat with them on the common needs of the realm', they simply failed to materialize, scenting, perhaps, the danger which faced them.[79]

Despite the fact that the barons set up alternative sheriffs in opposition to those appointed by the king, by autumn 1261, everyone could see that he was in the ascendancy. Between 14 October and 9 December, Henry was again based at the Tower, where he prepared for war by summoning the feudal host and giving orders for mercenaries to be allowed to make landfall in England. Faced with such forces, Gilbert de Clare (a key figure in the opposition) defected to the king, to be quickly followed by others. The Treaty of Kingston upon Thames of 21 November 1261 set the seal on Henry's victory and Simon de Montfort therefore decided to leave for France in disgust, declaring that 'he would rather die landless than abandon the truth'.[80] It was as comprehensive a victory as Henry could have wished. The council had been disbanded, its leader was in exile, the Lusignans were restored both to their properties and to their status as royal favourites, and the principles detailed in the Provisions of Oxford had been rejected. Henry could settle down to rule as he had done before 1258 and reopen the Sicilian Business. He wrote to the new pope, Urban IV, explaining that his son Edmund was ready to go to Sicily with an army and asking the pope to reinstitute the offer of the Sicilian crown to Edmund. Urban had the good sense to reply that the offer was no longer on the table, but the fact that Henry made the approach in the first place gives us an insight into the continued magnificent folly of a king who, despite all he had been through, remained unresponsive to the mood music being played by his magnates.

THE KING FREE OF HIS FETTERS

Henry's major problem was that the local communities of England rather liked the idea that the ruler needed their consent if he were to rule legitimately. It was no longer enough that Henry was God's anointed; the reforms that had followed in the wake of the Provisions of Oxford had created a widespread expectation that consent could and should be a political force in national politics. Simon and his baronial colleagues had not acted alone in their reforms, but had tapped into the grievances of the county communities of thirteenth-century England. Indeed, it was these local grievances that gave the reformers their political weight. Had there been nothing to reform, they would have seemed – and have been – petty men pursuing matters of self-interest and would soon have been swept away. But even at the level of the peasant, the reforms had given ordinary men and women hope that they were part of a common enterprise working for the good of the community of the realm; and certainly at the level of the country gentleman, there was a coherently expressed view that the barons were working for the common good.[81]

The king had another problem, too, in the form of Simon de Montfort. Henry decided that, despite the dangers it entailed, he would again make the journey to France and to the court of King Louis in order to undermine Simon's position there. It seems a foolish decision, on the face of it; indeed its foolishness has the force of contemporary opinion. The Dunstable annalist wrote that 'everyone was ignorant of the reason for the king's overseas trip' and that many 'took fright concerning the future'.[82] There is some reason to suppose that the journey to the French court was made because Henry desired to 'enjoy the company' of King Louis and Queen Margaret. That, certainly, was what Henry himself wrote.[83] Perhaps Henry did enjoy the company of his fellow royals, but it is more likely that he was motived by his need to undermine Simon de Montfort's position in France. For even though the earl was overseas, his looming presence and the fear of his return was felt in England. Henry must have calculated that key to his security was the removal of King Louis from Simon's camp.

It was a trip that took Henry out of English politics from 16 July until 20 December 1262, and it was, as many dreaded, a grievous error. It turned, moreover, what had been a trial of strength between baronial reformers and an incompetent king into one which looked for all the world like a personal feud between Simon and Henry. At home, government was left in the hands of a few trusted advisers who had neither the royal authority nor baronial confidence to act for the good of the realm and quickly disaffection arose, especially in the marches of Wales where Gilbert de Clare, the eighteen-year-old heir of the lately deceased Earl of Gloucester, was flexing his muscles having failed to secure his inheritance from Henry before he had reached his majority. The gathering storm of Welsh rebellion was also evident from the time of Henry's departure for France.

In early September 1262, while stabled at Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris, Henry fell ill, his court having been hit by an epidemic by which he lost some sixty or so of his courtiers. The king barely survived, finally recovering enough at the end of the month to conduct business, but remaining in poor health for the rest of his stay. It was perhaps this brush with death that prompted Henry to spend the remainder of his time in France visiting shrines despite the fact that his courtiers counselled against an extended stay. John Mansel wrote to the chancellor, Walter of Merton, about the matter:

> The king still persists in his intention of making a pilgrimage through various and remote parts of Burgundy which without doubt is wholly against our counsel. For we, while we were with him, did not cease to urge him to direct his steps to England, and afterwards, through our letters, which we frequently sent to him, we have urged the same and still urge it. But to no avail.[84]

While Henry visited the shrines of the saints, Simon returned to England with a letter from Pope Urban IV that threw the English political elite into turmoil. Simon timed his return to coincide with the Michaelmas parliament (he spoke at it on 13 October) to read out to the assembled magnates Urban's bull confirming the Provisions of Oxford and revoking the king's absolution from his oath to keep them. Simon then returned to France, leaving a political community up in arms. But even at this point, Henry remained in France, though he knew of Simon's intentions.[85] It was a remarkable dereliction of duty. When he did eventually return to England just in time for Christmas, his health remained a cause for concern, so much so that it prompted, in the New Year, measures to be taken to secure the succession of the Lord Edward should the worst occur. In February 1263, Edward returned from Gascony in the company of a large army hired for the purpose of restoring order in England and confronting the Welsh; in March, Henry ordered oaths to be sworn to his son that he would be accepted as Henry's successor. Edward, however, was at this stage in his life behaving as maladroitly as his father. He had brought from Gascony an army ready to suppress the Welsh revolt that was taking place, but made the mistake of offending his English followers by handing out patronage to his new foreign favourites. Given the current mood of the English baronage concerning individuals from overseas, it was a provocative act. From wearing the laurels of the victor, Henry, aided by the ineptitude of his son, Edward, was about to don the chains of the defeated. In April, the call went out from England for Simon de Montfort to return. He arrived around April 1263, and with Simon's re-entry into English politics, the kingdom was to be set on the road to civil war.

HENRY BACK IN FETTERS

Joining forces with the Welsh, Simon, together with Gilbert de Clare and a sizeable group of baronial rebels, took up arms and began to lay siege to castles held by loyalists for the king. Within a short time, the men of London had joined the rebellion, and Simon and his confederates began to move eastwards to the capital where they hoped to catch Henry (lodged in the Tower) and Edward (based at Windsor) unawares. Edmund, Henry's second son, who was by this time eighteen and beginning to emerge as a force in his own right, held custody of Dover, and it was with his help that some royalists began to escape England for the continent. Chief among those who fled to safety was the queen, followed by those others who feared for their lives. Simon's progress brought to his flag more and more men, who, emboldened by his successes, became willing to join forces with him until, in June, he was in a position to state clearly his objective:

to reinstate fully the Provisions of Oxford. By July, he had all but succeeded; having taken control of Dover from Edmund, he marched into London. On 16 July 1263, a peace was declared in which the primacy of the Provisions was reasserted and a call made for the exclusion of all foreigners from the government of England.

Whether the English in the mid thirteenth century hated all foreigners is doubtful, but certainly, Matthew Paris, the chronicler who dominates the narrative of the reign of Henry III down to 1259, despised them and was keen to tell his readers what characteristics made Poitevins, Savoyards, Provençals, Flemings, Greeks, Romans, the French, the Welsh and anyone else who came into his sights so loathsome, and, in doing so, Matthew captured something of the spirit of the age. The Sicilian Business, the behaviour of the king's half-brothers, the Lusignans, and the actions of the pope and his representatives pushed the English elite, and, it seems likely, a goodly proportion of the county communities of the kingdom, into a Brexit mindset, one which began to see foreigners as the root of the problem that faced the realm. By 1263, even the 'common people' were disparaging about those who could not speak English even if (as seems likely) Simon de Montfort himself was unfamiliar with the language. The court, after all, was French speaking, and the languages of administration were Latin and French. Unless he wished to converse with a peasant, there was no need for Simon to learn the language of the underclass; his estate officials would have dealt with the (largely) monoglot rustics tied to his English estates.

By mid July 1263, Simon was back in control and he had the support of not just his peers, the knights of the shire and the common people, but also of a substantial group of bishops who had swung the Church round in his favour. Claiming their right to reprimand the king, these 'Montfortian bishops', later forced to defend themselves in the face of suspension from office, argued that, in joining with Simon and in supporting the reimposition of the Provisions of Oxford, they had been acting as bishops ought in helping to restrain a king who had shown himself incapable of just rulership. In fact, so poor was Henry's position that for this period in his reign he may even have lost the support of his brother, Richard. For the next three months, Simon ruled the kingdom, very much in his own image rather than in the conciliar mould that had marked the reform movement of 1258. Foreigners were expelled, castles were given over to baronial castellans, the key offices of government were filled with Simon's appointees and the king's household was purged of characters likely to prove difficult to control. And in a remarkable piece of innovation, sheriffs were deprived of their military responsibilities, their duties to police their communities, and their judicial functions, and instead

keepers of the peace were instituted to take over those roles. Henceforth, sheriffs were to be officers answering to the Exchequer only for the finances of their counties. It was an imaginative attempt to deal with the perceived problems associated with the office of sheriff, which had come to be seen as being occupied by overmighty men who inflicted on their local populations the harshest demands of the crown while feathering their own nests.[86] It was such conditions that inspired stories of outlaw heroes who challenged the corrupt royal officials, stories that would find their way to modern times, most famously, in the legends of Robin Hood.

In late September, at a meeting in Boulogne between Simon, Henry, Eleanor and their two sons, over which the French king presided, Louis appears to have supported Simon, the Provisions and the principle that kingdoms should be governed by their own people, so long as the dispossessed received restitution of their property. It was a remarkable moment when an anointed king, Louis IX of France, accepted that there could be limitations placed on the freedom of action of another anointed king. But despite this victory, by the time of the October parliament, Simon was being deserted once again by key supporters, and when Edward and Henry established themselves at Windsor Castle in armed resistance, the earl was placed in a position whereby when a further offer of arbitration arrived from King Louis, he deemed it wise to accept.

THE SETTLEMENT AT AMIENS, JANUARY 1264

The arbitration by King Louis IX of France in the extended dispute between Henry III and his subjects is a remarkable moment in English history. Each side bound itself in advance to accept Louis's judgment in the matter and each side, therefore, must have thought from the outset that there was a good chance that the King of France would decide in its favour. From the baronial perspective, Simon and his companions must have had in mind the events of September 1263 when the French king arbitrated for the Provisions and everything they entailed. On Simon's side, too, were the Montfortian bishops, whose support provided him with much intellectual substance. Henry must have been confident of victory. He had on his side the majority of the higher nobility and he no doubt thought that God also favoured him; but perhaps more importantly, Henry may have received intelligence that he held the trump card. Those who had fled England in the summer of 1263 because of Simon's bid for power spoke out vigorously against the English reformers, and chief among those dropping royalist propaganda into Louis's ear was Queen Eleanor, sister of Louis's wife, Queen Margaret.[87] At this crucial moment in the political history of the kingdom, one of the key players was the king's

wife, who used her family connections to devastating effect. There is every indication, indeed, that Queen Eleanor had turned Louis's mind against the reformers as early as October 1263.[88] When Henry travelled in person to Amiens in January 1264 to present his case to Louis, therefore, he did so in the knowledge that the decision was foregone. King Louis gave his judgment 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit … quashing and invalidating all these provisions, ordinances, and obligations, and whatever else they may be called'.[89] Henry was, by this judgment, to rule as a king ought, unconstrained by any limitations put on him by his subjects. It was a comprehensive victory which had undoubtedly been won for Henry by his wife and her supporters.

TRIAL BY BATTLE: LEWES, 14 MAY 1264

In his declaration for Henry, Louis uncoupled Magna Carta (the principles by which Henry had promised to rule in 1225, 1235, 1237 and 1253) from the Provisions of Oxford of 1258 (the principles by which the magnates had agreed to rule Henry III), and the Provisions of Westminster of 1259 (by which the principles agreed at Oxford were put into statute law). Louis argued that an acceptance of the standing of Magna Carta did not mean an acceptance of the standing of the Provisions of Oxford and Westminster, and, if that were the case, he argued that he was perfectly within his rights to declare the Provisions void while stating that Magna Carta stood. But Simon and his associates could not accept this. Louis's decision, furthermore, was rejected by other significant groups within the kingdom, notably the men of London, 'almost all the middling people of the kingdom' and the Montfortian bishops.[90] On 3 April 1264, the first major engagement of the war occurred when Henry marched his army from Oxford to Northampton and captured the castle by force. On being faced with a king determined to use military might, the people of Leicester, Nottingham and Lincoln all bowed their heads to Henry. The tactical war continued for another month before, on 14 May, the two sides met in battle at Lewes, Sussex, after abortive negotiations led to a formal renunciation of homage to Henry by Simon and his associates.

The Battle of Lewes was one of the great set-piece events of the age. In thirteenth-century Europe, battles were rare, in part because they occurred only when both sides felt certain that they had the decisive advantage (it was relatively straightforward to avoid battle when necessary) and in part because the quickest way to win a battle was to kill or capture the opposition commander; unlike their modern counterparts, medieval war leaders led from the front and, as a result, were subject to more than their fair share of attention. A leader had to

be certain of success if he were to engage the enemy in a battle. Simon de Montfort was confident of victory. As an experienced and successful warrior who had led Henry III's armies in Gascony and in Wales, he knew his business, and he probably did not (having seen them up close) think highly of Henry's military capabilities. Henry, we must assume, despite the fact that he was confronting the best commander he himself had once put into the field, also believed that he would win the day. It is likely that he calculated that the odds were overwhelmingly in his favour: that is certainly the case argued by the chroniclers, who, though they are notoriously inaccurate when it comes to raw numbers, are in agreement about the relative size of the two armies. Henry had numbers on his side. But, trapped by Simon's army between the walls of the town and the edge of the ridge of the South Downs, the king was chased from the field of battle and barricaded himself in Lewes Priory while his son attacked the opposition army as it occupied the town. Eventually, Edward, too, had to join his father in the priory and Simon laid siege to it, but was unable (or more likely unwilling, given the presence of the king and his heir) to take it by force: the two sides then parleyed, coming to a settlement (after negotiating through the night) known to contemporaries as the Mise of Lewes.

The Provisions were restored, foreign counsellors were once again to be excluded from England, and a method was agreed by which any amendments to the Provisions might be arbitrated. Most importantly, Edward was to be held as a hostage to his father's good behaviour, as was his cousin Henry of Almain, who would be a hostage for his father, Richard of Cornwall. Richard had surrendered during the course of the battle and was to remain in captivity until released on 6 September 1265. All three were to be held at Wallingford. A parliament was called for June 1264, and, on 28 June, an ordinance was issued by which the new arrangements for the government of England were approved. The passing of the ordinance brought the king under the control of an electorate led by Simon and comprising two other individuals: Gilbert de Clare, the young Earl of Gloucester, who had been knighted by Simon on the field of Lewes; and Stephen Bersted, Bishop of Chichester. This group of three (a new triumvirate) was authorized to elect nine councillors, three of whom would always be in Henry's presence, and the nine (or a majority of the nine if they were in dispute) were to make decisions concerning 'the business of the realm'.[91] Henry was, once again, stripped of his power to act independently.

Lewes was seen by contemporaries as very much Simon's victory; but it was also very much Henry's defeat. Under Simon's control for the next fifteen months, the king was left to cool his heels while

Simon used the instruments of royal control given to him by the ordinance to run the kingdom. As later observers of the events, we might be struck by the fact that clearly Simon thought that he could not rule without possession of the king. Indeed, there seems to have been no indication (yet) that he thought to remove Henry and rule in his stead, whether as 'lord protector' or as anointed king himself. Simon needed, so he must have concluded, to rule through King Henry.

For Henry, this period of captivity must have been deeply unsettling. If he knew anything about history, he would have been aware of the perpetual imprisonment of one of his ancestors by another: Henry I had kept his brother Duke Robert of Normandy locked up from 1106 until his death in 1133. Perhaps Henry held out hope that he would be sprung from his prison. Certainly it must have helped Henry's mood that Simon kept the king in his company, rather than confining him in one of England's strongholds. Unlike Duke Robert, our King Henry as yet had no legitimate rival who could wield power without him. Throughout his period of captivity, therefore, Henry remained in a pivotal position. He was still the king, and since the power that Simon sought to exercise was royal power, Simon needed Henry alive. There were, moreover, pockets of royalist resistance to Simon's rule. One attempt was made to release Edward in November 1264, albeit unsuccessfully, resulting in his removal to the more secure Kenilworth Castle, along with Henry of Almain and Richard of Cornwall. And in the summer of 1264, it was well known that Queen Eleanor was mustering an army in France. The queen was proving herself to be a valuable player in the events that were unfolding; her actions forced Simon's regime to muster the feudal levy in preparation for the invasion that might make landfall on English soil.

The triumvirate (Simon de Montfort, Gilbert de Clare and Stephen Bersted) ruled England through Henry, with Simon as their leader. As is so often the case among such men, however, it was hubris, the besetting sin of powerful individuals throughout the ages, that brought about Simon's downfall. He was widely seen as promoting his own and his family's interests, an accusation to which he had always been susceptible since the earliest days of the reform movement, and, at the meeting of the Hilary Parliament (which lasted from January until mid March 1265 and which, because of the presence of knights and burgesses, has been given the honour of being seen as the first true parliament and therefore awarded a capital 'P' in the literature, as are all subsequent parliaments), he was criticized for amassing for himself by malfeasance a huge fortune at the expense of enemies and allies alike. It was a foolish thing to have done, one which made him

rich beyond the dreams of avarice in land and treasures, but poor in friends and supporters. It drove Gilbert de Clare, a lynchpin of the triumvirate, back into the royalist camp. Simon was proving himself to be as inept a ruler in disposing of patronage as had Henry III. He had created a base of support that was too narrow to sustain him.

The main business of the Hilary Parliament was the further establishment of Simon's rule. Henry was required to swear that he would not seek reprisals against Simon and Gilbert de Clare and others of their supporters, to observe the terms of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest, and to submit himself to the rule of the triumvirate. The reissue of Magna Carta was very much a continuation of Simon's policy to link the Provisions with it, despite King Louis's ruling of the previous year that had sought to disengage the two texts.[92] He was seeking to provide the legitimizing imprimatur of Magna Carta to his radical reforms, which included the holding captive of the king and the male (and therefore king-worthy) family members. Having acquired Henry's compliance in these matters, Simon brought Edward and his cousin Henry of Almain to the Parliament, where they were required to swear a similar oath; Edward was to submit his household to control by the baronial council, and he was warned that should he renege on his oath, then the spectre of disinheritance could be raised.[93] The fact that Simon had earlier in 1264 taken from Edward the vast bulk of his lands, including the massively wealthy palatine earldom of Chester, and given them to himself in fee (in other words to be inherited by his heirs), suggests that the complete disinheritance of Edward and the supplanting of the Plantagenet dynasty by his own was already in Simon's mind.

TRIAL BY BATTLE: EVESHAM, 4 AUGUST 1265

The defection of Gilbert de Clare was crucial, and Simon knew it. Simon had control of Henry III and of his son Edward, both of whom he kept in his company, but Gilbert was a real threat to his power because he controlled the marches of Wales. From Wales and the marches had come most of the trouble of Henry's reign, and Simon could not afford for it to be a hostile base in the kingdom. He decided to confront Gilbert militarily, and in the company of the king and his son, Simon marched on Gloucester. At Gloucester, the two talked. Gilbert accused Simon of abandoning the Provisions of Oxford and the agreement after Lewes, which were charges that were not unfounded, and the two could not resolve their differences. Simon then moved to Hereford and made this the centre of his operations, while Gilbert cemented his alliance with the Lusignans, who had returned to the scene in the person of William de Valence and John de Warenne (who had, in 1248, married Alice de Lusignan, William's sister). They had

made landfall in Pembroke with a large army. Henry's foreign and native allies were massing to confront Simon by force. The crucial moment came on 28 May when, while exercising some horses outside Hereford, Edward made a pre-prepared dash for freedom. Within hours, he was in the company of Gilbert de Clare with whom he came to terms. Simon had lost one of the keys to his control of the kingdom and the royalists had acquired a figurehead around whom they could gather. And unlike his father, Edward was developing into a formidable military commander. Under his leadership, the royalist forces took a series of castles on the marches, effectively trapping Simon at Hereford. Then, in early August, Simon left the city, attempting to meet up with his son, Simon junior, as he brought a relieving army from Kenilworth. Simon senior arrived at Evesham on 4 August, where he was caught by surprise by Edward's army, returning from its foray towards Kenilworth, and was forced to come to battle.

The Battle of Evesham was Simon's denouement, resulting not just in his death and that of his eldest son and heir, Henry, but also of a considerable number of his aristocratic followers. The brutality with which the victors pursued the defeated was commented upon by contemporaries, one of whom was moved to call Evesham a 'murder' not a 'battle'. By tradition, nobles were ransomed rather than killed when taken in battle, but the extreme emotions that had built up over the preceding months and years led to a bloodletting that had not been seen on English soil since the days of the Anglo-Saxons. In particular, Edward instructed his troops to focus on Simon. Before the battle, Edward formed a death squad, whose sole duty was to kill the leader of political reform. Having taken Simon's life, this group deliberately mutilated his body, again an extremely unusual occurrence in the context of chivalric warfare in the thirteenth century.[94] Many common soldiers were also killed. Perhaps the vehemence with which this group of combatants was pursued reflected the fact that Simon had committed class treason by encouraging the unworthy to believe that they, too, had a stake in the kingdom. Henry III, who was in the company of Simon as he was struck down, called out to an attacking knight, 'I am Henry of Winchester your king, do not kill me.' Injured in the shoulder, the fifty-seven-year-old king survived and was taken to safety by his victorious son.

AFTER EVESHAM

What is remarkable about the death of Simon de Montfort is that it did not bring to an end the civil war. He had miscalculated badly by using his patronage for the aggrandizement of his family and a small body

of supporters, so much so that he had allowed the king's side, led by Edward, to gather sufficient forces to bring him to battle at Evesham and to remove him from the politics of the day. Yet war continued, and did so in part because the orgy of killing that had followed victory at Evesham metamorphosed into an orgy of seizures of property that had belonged to Simon and his followers. The opportunity to attack neighbours who, until Evesham, had received the protection of Simon's regime was too tempting to resist for those in all parts of English society, from the highest lord to the lowest freeman. In the September Parliament, Henry made the announcement that the lands of Simon and his supporters were forfeit, and that the main beneficiaries were to be members of the royal family. In this act we are once again reminded that many thirteenth-century men and women had a tenuous grasp of the ethics of rulership, despite their repeated public pronouncements to the contrary: the kingdom was put there by God in order that they might predate on it. Even the widows of the fallen at Evesham found themselves, initially at least, on the wrong side of the law, since their dowers were deemed forfeit for their husbands' disloyalty. In the summer and autumn of 1265, women and children were to be pursued through the courts with the same vengeance that had been visited on their menfolk on the battlefield. The Londoners, too, were heavily oppressed for their role in the rebellion, only being readmitted to royal favour in January 1266 on the promise of paying the staggeringly large fine of 20,000 marks.

These punitive acts made it impossible for the rebels to give up the struggle, and many of them, faced with financial ruin, decided that with nothing to lose they would fight on. A band led by John d'Eyville held out against the king's forces on the Isle of Ely, for example, making raids in Cambridgeshire.[95] In other parts of the kingdom, rebels had to be taken by force; at Kenilworth Castle, a protracted siege was undertaken that was only resolved when the garrison was defeated by the cold and by the appalling sanitary conditions. The document that came out of the siege, however, the so-called Dictum of Kenilworth, promulgated on 31 October 1266, fifteen months after the events at Evesham, did have a lasting effect on the peacemaking process because it enshrined the principle that former rebels could buy back their lands for a price that varied according to the level of their involvement in the movement.[96] Many of the smaller fry took the opportunity presented to make their peace with the authorities, though the Dictum did not pacify everyone initially. In April 1267, John d'Eyville combined forces with Gilbert de Clare (stung into action by the injustice of the settlement after Evesham) to march on London, where they occupied the city. Henry set up his camp at Stratford and the two sides negotiated as they prepared for war. Then,

on 20 June, Henry agreed that the disinherited would be restored to their properties and rights, Gilbert returned to his lands and John and his associates were pardoned for their actions and were promised their lands under the terms of the Dictum.

While the attack on the losers at Evesham drove many of them further into rebellion, another sustaining feature of their struggle was that the demands for reform had widespread support. This had always been the strength of Simon's position, and it continued to bolster the position of Henry III's opponents after Simon's death. Evesham might have been a royalist victory, but it was not an opportunity to return matters to the way that they were in 1258. Though in the summer of 1267 Henry could enjoy his kingdom in peace and tranquillity for the first time in a decade, concessions still had to be made to maintain the peace. In mid November 1267, the king issued the Statute of Marlborough in which were enshrined in English law the Provisions of Westminster in their final form (the 1259 Provisions having been revised and promulgated in 1263 and again in 1264) and the principles of the Dictum of Kenilworth which had brought about peace. The Statute of Marlborough became one of the four defining pieces of Henry's legislation (along with Magna Carta, the Charter of the Forest of 1225 and the Provisions of Merton of 1236) that were to be included henceforth in all future statute collections, the texts which provided generations of lawyers with their legal training.[97] Although the Statute of Marlborough did not acquire the lustre of the charters of liberties, in legal circles it none the less came to be just as significant, because it enshrined the principle of title to land so that men and women might hold their properties without punitive action on the part of the crown and so that rebels might be allowed to redeem their lands (albeit at an often crippling price). The promulgation of the Statute of Marlborough was a defining moment in Henry's reign and in the history of the English Common Law.

LAST YEARS AND DEATH

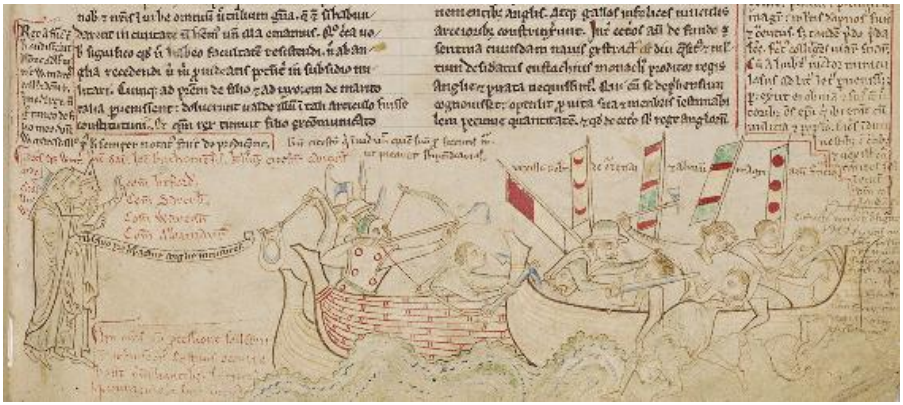
In 1268, Edward (along with his brother Edmund, Henry of Almain, Gilbert de Clare and others) took the cross, intending to join King Louis's new crusade which was preparing to set sail for the east. Edward could not join Louis without funding, for which Henry sought direct taxation from his subjects. No such tax had been granted to Henry since 1237, so a request for financial aid for Edward's crusade would test Henry's status in a post-Montfortian England. It took a concerted effort through the course of seven separate parliaments (meeting between autumn 1268 and spring 1270) before Henry was able to persuade the representatives of the community of the realm to grant a twentieth on movables. The grant had cost Henry far-reaching

concessions, not just to his magnates but also to the knights of the shire and to burgesses, which included a restatement of the importance of the charters of liberties. More significantly, Henry's reliance on Parliament made manifest its pre-eminent position in the political affairs of the kingdom. Parliament was now established as a central pillar of English government and as the rightful place for discussions of matters of political weight, with the knights playing a crucial role in the deliberations. The rebellion might be over, but the principles of reform for which many had argued, fought and lost their lives had evidently not died with them and their champion at Evesham.

With the tax conceded and gathered, Edward departed for the Holy Land in the summer of 1270. Henry must have feared for his heir's safety, but equally he must have feared that he would not live to see his son's return. His last years were beset by illness, and although not old by modern standards, by those of his own day he had had a long life. When he died, on 16 November 1272, he had just turned sixty-five, having outlived most people of his own generation, including his younger brother, Richard, who had died six months earlier. Henry was interred in Westminster Abbey in the tomb from which Edward the Confessor had been translated in 1269, in close proximity to the relocated body of the saint to whose devotion Henry had been so committed.[98] On 20 November 1272, the king's corpse was carried on an open bier, dressed in the full regalia with which he had been adorned at his second coronation in 1220. It seems likely that the decision to vest his remains in such a manner was one taken by Henry himself. He wanted to present himself to those who witnessed his funeral cortège as an anointed king possessing the full glory and plenitude of royal power. It was a vision that prompted one eyewitness to write that Henry 'shone forth with greater splendour dead than when he was alive'.[99] It is an epitaph that rather sums up the man. Henry had wedded himself to an image of royalty that was out of keeping with the ideal of his day. Kings, whether they liked it or not, had a set of standards to which they were supposed to adhere and by which they were to be judged. Most contemporaries would have argued that it was a king's job to put in peril his soul for the good of his Church and of his people. But Henry was too self-obsessed to do that, too determined to live a life of a confessor saint and thereby join the mystical body of Christ in heaven and so be revered by the faithful in this world. In an age when the cult of royal saints was in the ascendancy, Henry's ambition is understandable, but it was hardly justifiable and it was certainly not heroic.[100]

Illustrations

1. Henry III as a baby in a cradle, from Matthew Paris's *Historia Anglorum*. Paris was the pre-eminent historian of his generation. He knew Henry III personally and many of the court circle.



2. The Battle of Sandwich of 24 August 1217 was the decisive engagement of the war against Louis of France. The French forces were scattered. From this moment onwards, Louis's cause was lost.

3. The Charter of the Forest of 1225. The royal forests of England played a central part in the drama of 1215.

4. Like most married couples of their status, Henry and Eleanor were considerably different in age. On their wedding day, 14 January 1236, Henry was twenty-eight, Eleanor was twelve.

5. Edward the Confessor, shown here receiving his bride in a manuscript image from *c.*1255, was Henry's special saint to whom he remained devoted all his life.

6. God's hand blessing the king's head, with a note, 'Nota protectionem dei' (a sign of God's protection), following an attempt to kill Henry in 1238.

7. Dover Castle was perhaps the greatest of English medieval castles. Once described as the ‘key to England’, it remained the principal fortification defending the coast throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern era, a role it seems set to resume shortly.

8. The Breton expedition in 1230 was Henry's first attempt to recover the family continental lands which had been lost by his father, King John.

9. Henry (above left) appears to have held Louis IX in high regard. It seems likely that the feeling was not returned.

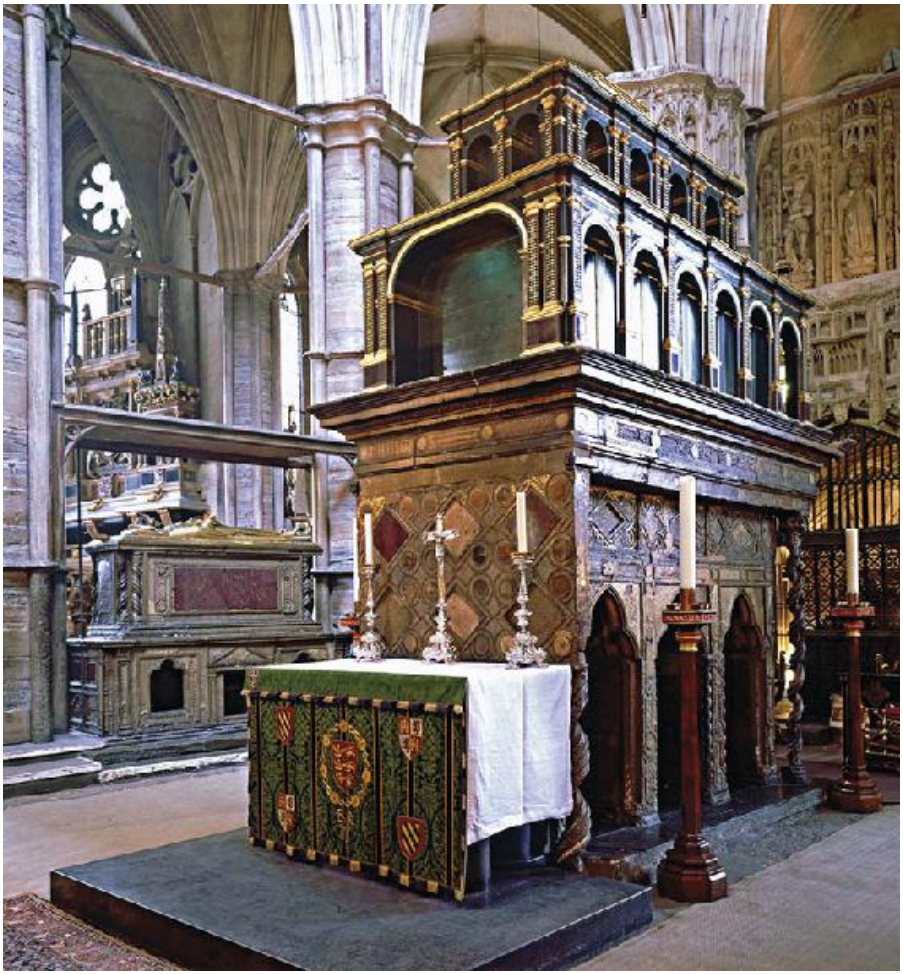
10. The hammered silver penny was the normal currency in thirteenth-century England, but in 1257 Henry introduced a gold penny (worth twenty silver pennies).

11. Henry delighted in grand public ceremonies and was a man who responded emotionally to situations. His devotion to the relic of the Holy Blood was genuine, even if not everyone agreed that such a relic could exist.

12. Henry's second son, Edmund, was offered the Sicilian throne on 6 March 1254. This gold bulla must date from *c.*1261, when Edmund wrote to his Sicilian subjects telling them to prepare for his arrival.

13. The Battle of Evesham, 4 August 1265, was the decisive engagement of the civil war: by it, Henry was released, Simon de Montfort killed and the king's position in the kingdom re-established.

14. The reburial of King Edward in 1269. The Confessor's miracles centred around healing the sick – shown kneeling and crawling here. Henry, in imitation of his saint, was the first English king to regularly touch those suffering from the king's evil (scrofula), a custom maintained by his successors until 1714 when George I discontinued the practice.



15. After a magnificent funeral, Henry's body was temporarily laid in the burial chamber that had been the Confessor's in Westminster Abbey. Much later, in 1291, it was placed in a splendid tomb commissioned by Edward I (seen behind the tomb of Edward the Confessor in this photograph).

16. Henry’s tomb effigy of gilt bronze shows the king’s head resting on pillows decorated with the lions of England, which also cover the top of the tomb.

17. Pictorial tiles from the pavement of the Chapter House at Westminster Abbey, laid *c*.1255, showing the arms of Henry III (left) and a king (Henry?) in a court scene (right).

Notes

ABBREVIATIONS

Annales Monastici	*Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series, 5 vols (London: 1864–9)
Baronial Movement	*Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267*, ed. and trans. R. F. Treharne and I. J. Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)
Baronial Plan	R. F. Treharne, *The Baronial Plan of Reform, 1258–63* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1932)
Chronica Majora	*Matthaei Parisiensis: Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series, 7 vols (London: 1872–83)
EHR	*English Historical Review*
Foedera	*Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Cuiuscunque Generis Acta Publica*, ed. T. Rymer, new edn, ed. A. Clark and F. Holbrooke (London: Record Commission, 1816), I.i
Patent Rolls	*Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry III*, vol. 4: *1247–1258* and vol. 5: *1258–1266* (London: HMSO, 1908 and 1910)
Simon de Montfort	J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

1. S. D. Church, 'King John's Testament and the Last Days of His Reign', *EHR*, 125 (2010), pp. 505–28 (at pp. 516–17).
2. *The Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, Papal Legate in England*, ed. N. C. Vincent (Woodbridge: Canterbury and York Society, 1996), no. 140b.
3. *Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala*, no. 36.
4. *Foedera*, p. 145.
5. A. J. Heslin, 'The Coronation of the Young King in 1170', in *Studies in Church History*, vol. 2, ed. G. J. Cuming (London: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1965), pp. 165–85 (at p. 177). The bull is in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, ed. J.-P.

Migne, 221 vols (Paris: 1841–55), CC, cols 11899–12200, and dated by the editor to 1175–9, but is clearly earlier than that.

6. *Expugnatio Hibernica*, ed. and trans. A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), pp. 242–5.
7. *History of William Marshal*, ed. and trans. A. J. Holden, S. Gregory and D. Crouch, 3 vols (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002–6), III, lines 15295–8.
8. The phrase belongs to W. L. Warren, *King John* (London: Methuen, 1961), p. 256.
9. *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and trans. E. Searle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 214–15.
10. T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber, and the Small Seals*, 6 vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920–33), I, pp. 129–57; N. C. Vincent, 'The Seals of Henry II and His Court', in *Seals and Their Context in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Schofield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 7–34.
11. N. C. Vincent, *The Magna Carta*, sale catalogue, 18 December 2007 (New York: Sotheby's, 2007), pp. 60–64.
12. The French king was sanctified in 1290 but is referred to in this book as Louis, not St Louis, so as to discourage readers from seeing his life through the retrospective lens of sainthood.
13. The standard text and translation of Magna Carta 1215 may now be found here: http://magnacarta.cmp.uea.ac.uk/read/magna_carta_1215. Magna Carta 1225 is still best approached through J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), which is translated in *English Historical Documents, 1189–1327*, ed. and trans. H. Rothwell (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1975). All quotations in this section are from the texts of Magna Carta cited here.
14. S. Ambler, 'The fine roll of 11 Henry III, 28 October 1226–27 October 1227', at http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/month/fm-12-2007.html.
15. The best exposition of this form of government is still to be found in J. E. A. Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, 2nd edn (London: A & C Black, 1963).
16. M. Strickland, 'Against the Lord's Anointed: Aspects of Warfare and Baronial Rebellion in England and Normandy, 1075–1265', in *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy: Essays in Honour of J. C. Holt*, ed. J. Hudson and G. Garnett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 56–78.
17. C. Veach, 'King John and Royal Control in Ireland: Why William de Briouze had to be Destroyed', *EHR*, 129 (2014), pp. 1051–78.
18. T. Reuter, 'Assembly Politics in Western Europe from the Eighth

Century to the Twelfth', in his *Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities*, ed. J. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 193–216.

19. According to Matthew Paris, in 1239 the king accused Hubert of having obstructed a marriage to an unnamed 'noble lady, by secretly informing the said lady and her family that he, the king, was squint-eyed, silly, and impotent; that he had a sort of leprosy; that he was deceitful, perjured, weak, and more a woman than a man; that he only vented his rage on his own followers, and was entirely incapable of enjoying the embrace of any noble lady' (*Chronica Majora*, III, pp. 618–19).
20. Margaret Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 15, n. 68, would have Henry unable to restrain himself, but see J. C. Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150–1500', in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. J. C. Parsons (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1997), pp. 63–78. Their first child, Edward, was born on the night of 17–18 June 1239, when Eleanor would have been in her sixteenth or seventeenth year.
21. F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward: The Community of the Realm in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), Appendix B, 'The Murder of Henry Clement and its Consequences', pp. 740–59, lays out all the evidence for this tale.
22. F. W. Maitland, 'The Murder of Henry Clement', *EHR*, 10 (1895), pp. 294–6 (at p. 296).
23. *Royal and Other Historical Letters Illustrative of the Reign of Henry III*, ed. W. W. Shirley, Rolls Series, 2 vols (London: 1862–6), I, pp. 114–15.
24. H. M. Chew, 'Scutage under Edward I', *EHR*, 37 (1922), pp. 321–36.
25. Magna Carta 1225, cap. 37.
26. J. R. Maddicott, *The Origins of the English Parliament, 924–1327* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 157–60, 455–6.
27. *Chronica Majora*, IV, pp. 366–8.
28. Indeed, Simon de Montfort is said at this time to have accused Henry of being a simpleton who needed locking up. The comparison he made was with Charles the Simple, who had been imprisoned after the Battle of Soissons in 923: *Simon de Montfort*, p. 32.
29. *The History of the King's Works: The Middle Ages*, ed. R. A. Brown, H. M. Colvin and A. J. Taylor, 2 vols (London: HMSO, 1963), pp. 130–57 (at p. 133); the cost of rebuilding Westminster Abbey was prodigious and put an enormous strain on royal finances for the remainder of the reign (pp. 134–5, 155–7).

30. In 1246, Henry made his first will in which he left his body to Westminster Abbey. The document, with the seal of Henry III appended, remains still in the abbey's archive (WAM 6318a).
31. L. Keen, 'Decorated Tile Pavement', in *Westminster Abbey Chapter House: The History, Art, and Architecture of 'A Chapter House Beyond Compare'*, ed. W. Rodwell and R. Mortimer (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2010), pp. 230–31.
32. *Chronica Majora*, IV, pp. 641–2; V, pp. 81–2.
33. S. Lloyd, 'King Henry III, the Crusade and the Mediterranean', in *England and Her Neighbours 1066–1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais*, ed. M. Jones and M. Vale (London: Hambledon, 1989), pp. 97–120.
34. *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, ed. A. Potthast, (Berlin: Rudolf de Decker, 1874), I, no. 14163, p. 1116. The pope was probably thinking of I Chronicles 16:31: 'Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, the Lord reigneth.'
35. Maddicott, *The Origins of the English Parliament*, p. 470.
36. *Chronica Majora*, V, pp. 520–27.
37. B. Weiler, 'Henry III and the Sicilian Business: A Reinterpretation', *Historical Research*, 74 (2001), pp. 127–50.
38. *Chronica Majora*, V, pp. 520, 681, 682.
39. *Chronica Majora*, V, pp. 680–88.
40. *Chronica Majora*, V, pp. 688–89.
41. *Chronica Majora*, V, p. 594.
42. D. A. Carpenter, 'What Happened in 1258?', in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich*, ed. J. Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1984), pp. 106–19, and his *The Reign of Henry III* (London: Hambledon, 1996), pp. 183–98 (at pp. 192–3).
43. *Chronica Majora*, V, pp. 676–7.
44. *Baronial Movement*, nos 1, 2.
45. *Baronial Movement*, no. 3.
46. *Chronica Majora*, V, p. 689.
47. J. Hey, 'Two Oaths of the Community in 1258', *Historical Research*, 88 (2015), pp. 213–29.
48. *Baronial Movement*, no. 5, cap. 16, pp. 106–9.
49. *Baronial Movement*, no. 5, caps 4–8, pp. 100–103; caps 14, 17, pp. 106–9; cap. 21, pp. 110–11.
50. Matthew Paris gives 18 July as the date (*Chronica Majora*, V, p. 702); their safe conducts were to last, however, only to 14 July (*Patent Rolls*, IV, p. 640).
51. *Chronica Majora*, V, p. 706.
52. *Baronial Movement*, no. 5, cap. 18, pp. 108–9.

53. *Patent Rolls*, IV, pp. 644–5.
54. See, for example, *Baronial Movement*, pp. 136–7, where it is stated regarding the 'Ordinances of the Magnates' (28 March 1259) that 'identical letters in French are sent to all the counties of England, and all the sheriffs of England are ordered to have these letters … publicly read in their full county courts and in each of the hundreds of their counties, and elsewhere throughout their bailiwicks.'
55. *Baronial Plan*, pp. 111–13.
56. P. Chaplais, 'The Making of the Treaty of Paris (1259) and the Royal Style', *EHR*, 67 (1952), pp. 235–53; D. A. Carpenter, 'Aspects of the revolution of 1258', http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk, September 2012, pp. 2–3.
57. *Patent Rolls*, IV, p. 640.
58. *Chronica Majora*, V, pp. 732, 737.
59. *Chronica Majora*, V, p. 745; *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 178–84.
60. *Chronica Majora*, V, pp. 733–4.
61. *Annales Monastici*, I, p. 471.
62. *Baronial Movement*, no. 11, pp. 136–49; *Simon de Montfort*, p. 185.
63. *Diplomatic Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office*, vol. 1: *1101–1272*, ed. P. Chaplais (London: HMSO, 1964), no. 305, p. 213.
64. Chaplais, 'Making of the Treaty of Paris', p. 247; for Henry's itinerary, see *Baronial Plan*, pp. 383–7.
65. G. Sommers Wright, 'A Royal Tomb Programme in the Reign of St Louis', *Art Bulletin*, 56 (1974), pp. 224–43 (at p. 226); *La France de Saint Louis*, exhibition catalogue, Paris 1970, plate 33, pp. 36–7, carries a depiction of Henry III and Louis IX bearing the bier that retains something of the pathos of the moment, despite its battered condition, and despite the fact that it is a nineteenth-century reproduction.
66. D. A. Carpenter, 'The Lord Edward's Oath to Aid and Counsel Simon de Montfort, 15 October 1259', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 58 (1985), pp. 226–37, and reprinted in his *Reign of Henry III*, pp. 241–52.
67. *Simon de Montfort*, p. 194; *Baronial Plan*, p. 225.
68. *Baronial Movement*, nos 19, 20, pp. 178–81.
69. *Baronial Movement*, nos 21, 23, pp. 180–87.
70. *Baronial Plan*, pp. 231–5.
71. *Baronial Movement*, no. 29. The text survives in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 9016, a collection of manuscripts bought from M. le comte Joly de Fleury in 1836. The Joly de Fleury family came from Burgundy and were in Paris by the seventeenth century, so perhaps they acquired the manuscript

from documents that came to France with Simon's surviving descendants.

72. *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, ed. J. Alexander and P. Binski (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1988), p. 397.
73. A note of the event was recorded on the Chancery enrolments for the day: *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry III*, vol. 4: *1251–1260* (London: HMSO, 1959), p. 533; *Patent Rolls*, V, p. 97; *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office*, vol. 11: *1259–1261* (London: HMSO, 1934), p. 130.
74. *Simon de Montfort*, p. 205; R. Studd, *An Itinerary of Lord Edward*, vol. 284 (London: List & Index Society, 2000), pp. 54–6 (up to the point of Edward's return in January/February 1261). Edward was again in Gascony from August 1261 to 22 February 1262 (*Itinerary*, pp. 58–62).
75. *Baronial Movement*, pp. 222–3; Huw Ridgeway, 'King Henry III's Grievances Against the Council in 1261', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 61 (1988), pp. 227–42 (at p. 232).
76. *Baronial Movement*, nos 33–5 (at pp. 244–5).
77. L. Landon, *The Itinerary of King Richard I* (London: Pipe Roll Society, New Series 13, 1935), Appendix B, p. 186; the author of the St Albans' *Flores Historiarum*, Rolls Series, 3 vols (London: 1890), II, p. 468, states that the prelates of southern England were summoned to London for 16 May to hear the pope's mandate.
78. Mansel was a man with impeccable royalist credentials: Powicke, *Henry III and the Lord Edward*, p. 294 and n. 2.
79. *Baronial Plan*, p. 266.
80. *Simon de Montfort*, p. 214.
81. *Annales Monastici*, I, p. 471.
82. *Annales Monastici*, III, p. 218.
83. D. A. Carpenter, 'The Meetings of Henry III and Louis IX', *Thirteenth-Century England*, 10 (2003), pp. 1–30 (at p. 24).
84. *Foedera*, p. 422 (probably written around mid November when the king was at Reims).
85. *Diplomatic Documents*, I, no. 369.
86. *Baronial Plan*, pp. 316–19.
87. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 203–5.
88. By which time Louis had sent to the papal court messages in support of Henry: *Baronial Movement*, pp. 288–9.
89. *Baronial Movement*, pp. 286–7.
90. *Simon de Montfort*, p. 263.
91. *Foedera*, p. 444.

92. S. Ambler, ‘Magna Carta: Its Confirmation at Simon de Montfort’s Parliament of 1265’, *EHR*, 130 (2015), pp. 801–30.
93. *Foedera*, p. 455b. The context of the threat was the possibility of Edward introducing aliens into England, but it raised the possibility that Edward might not take up his inheritance on his father’s death.
94. O. de Laborderie, J. R. Maddicott and D. A. Carpenter, ‘The Last Hours of Simon de Montfort: A New Account’, *EHR*, 115 (2000), pp. 378–412.
95. E. F. Jacob, *Studies in the Period of Baronial Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 236–9; A. Lewis, ‘Roger Leyburn and the Pacification of England, 1265–7’, *EHR*, 54 (1939), pp. 193–204.
96. *Baronial Movement*, no. 44.
97. Paul Brand, *Kings, Barons and Justices: The Making and Enforcement of Legislation in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 185–204; text and translation at pp. 453–83.
98. His heart was extracted from his body and, in 1291, was collected by the Abbess of Fontevraud, where it remained until 1793, after which it was traded before being given to the Ursuline community at Edinburgh: J. M. Hanna, ‘Notes on the Royal Heart Preserved at St Margaret’s Convent, Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 51 (1916), pp. 16–23.
99. D. A. Carpenter, ‘The Burial of King Henry III, the Regalia and the Royal Ideology’, in his *Reign of Henry III*, pp. 427–61. The observer was Thomas Wykes, who, in 1272, was a resident in London.
100. The phrase is inspired by John Gillingham’s assessment of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury 1093–1109, in his *William II: The Red King* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), p. 40.

Further Reading

Background reading for Henry's life is to be found in the works on King John. There are good narratives in the various biographies of Henry's father, but my publisher would not forgive me if I were to direct the reader to any other biography than my own *King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant* (London: Macmillan, 2015). A more detailed analysis of the immediate crisis that led to the production of Magna Carta is to be found in J. C. Holt's *Magna Carta*, now in its third, posthumous, edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), which remains a key guide to the subject. David Carpenter's *Magna Carta* (London: Penguin, 2015) provides invaluable analysis of not just the 1215 text, but also of the path to its issue and the route it took down to 1225. The website that accompanies the Magna Carta project, out of which Carpenter's work emerged, is a model of how these online resources should be presented (http://magnacarta.cmp.uea.ac.uk). There the visitor will find articles on particular subjects by Carpenter, Nicholas Vincent, Sophie Ambler and Henry Summerson.

Especially valuable is Summerson's line-by-line commentary on the text of Magna Carta (though the editors' insistence that the Latin word *homo* should be translated as 'man', and not 'person' or 'man and woman', is a source of continued irritation. The terms of Magna Carta applied to men *and* women and that should be reflected in the English rendering). The website has a companion site focused on the Fine Rolls of Henry III that also has a collection of valuable essays which are absolutely essential reading (http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/home.html); they are available free from the website.

The standard biography of Henry III remains the two-volume work by F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), though its arrangement makes for a challenging read for the student in search of a narrative peg on which to hang any analysis. The appearance of the biography of Henry by Carpenter is eagerly anticipated. It is Carpenter who, over the last forty years, has played a leading role in transforming our understanding of Henry's life and times, and his work, therefore, underpins much of the interpretation offered here. Many of his key

articles are collected in his *The Reign of Henry III* (London: Hambledon, 1996), and his *The Minority of Henry III* (London: Methuen, 1990) provides a comprehensive analytical and narrative structure for the period 1216 to 1225. Kate Norgate's *The Minority of Henry III* (London: Macmillan, 1912) is still valuable, as are the two articles on the subject of the Minority by G. J. Turner in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* published in 1904 and 1907.

Brilliant for the political and financial background to the first half of Henry's reign is R. C. Stacey's *Politics, Policy and Finance under Henry III, 1216–45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Stacey explains with admirable clarity and extraordinary insight the root of Henry's difficulties during the first part of his personal rule. S. L. Waugh, *The Lordship of England: Royal Wardships in Society and Politics, 1217–1327* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), explores the patronage that was at Henry's disposal and shows what a powerful tool it should have been in the hands of the right individual. Crucial for understanding the whole of the reign is J. R. Maddicott's *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). This is more than just a biography or, indeed, just an account of the events of the period of baronial reform; it places Simon's life in the widest of contexts and so provides a superb analysis of the central years of Henry's life and reign. Equally crucial to an understanding of Henry's time is his *The Origins of the English Parliament, 924–1327* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), which is an indispensable guide to the development of parliament in the thirteenth century. Like Carpenter, Maddicott has provided a number of important studies in article form, but they must be sought out in journals since they have yet to be collected together (it is about time that they were). Another crucial book for the whole period is Margaret Howell's *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), which provides important insights into the role of Henry's queen during his life. It was Howell, for example, who was first to take sufficient notice of Eleanor's role in the crisis of 1258. A clear survey of the period by a legal historian who writes lucidly is in Alan Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and an insightful survey by a political historian is to be found in Michael Prestwich, *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990). The German perspective is best approached through Björn Weiler's *Henry III and the Staufen Empire, 1216–1272* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006); the French perspective through Jacques Le Goff's *Saint Louis* (first published in French in 1996), translated by Gareth Evan Gollrad (Notre Dame, Ill.: Notre Dame University Press, 2009), which is complemented by Lindy Grant's biography *Blanche of Castile: Queen of France* (New Haven,

Conn.: Yale University Press, 2016); and the papal perspective through Robert Brentano's award-winning *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968). David Abulafia's *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean, 1100–1400* (London: Penguin, 1988) gives the Sicilian background. Simon Lloyd's *English Society and the Crusade, 1216–1307* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) is invaluable for England's place in this wider Christian movement.

Much of what has changed our understanding of Henry III since Powicke wrote has been published in the form of articles and scholarly studies on aspects of Henry's life and reign. The works of Carpenter and Maddicott have already been mentioned, but no study of Henry can do without the invaluable work of Huw Ridgeway. His studies on the aliens (the Savoyards and the Lusignans) in Henry III's court have been profoundly influential. Noticeably important have been his 'The Lord Edward and the Provisions of Oxford, a Study in Faction', *Thirteenth-Century England*, 1 (1986), pp. 89–99; 'King Henry III and the Aliens, 1236–72', *Thirteenth-Century England*, 2 (1988), pp. 81–92; 'King Henry III's Grievances Against the Council in 1261', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 61 (1988), pp. 227–42; 'Foreign Favourites and Henry III's Problems of Patronage, 1247–58', *English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), pp. 590–610; and his 'The Sheriffs of the Baronial Movement, 1258–61', in *Regionalism and Revision: The Crown and its Provinces in England, 1250–1650*, edited by P. Fleming, A. Gross and J. R. Lander (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), pp. 59–86. E. L. Cox's *The Eagles of Savoy: The House of Savoy in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974) provides the starting point for Ridgeway's study of Queen Eleanor's Savoyard family, but is still a valuable source of material in its own right.

The period of baronial reform has provided historians since the nineteenth century with endless fascination. Without wishing to put aside too easily W. H. Blaauw's *The Barons' War* (London: Nichols and Son, 1844) and C. Bémont's *Simon de Montfort* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1884; important for the transcripts of documents that he included as appendices), the great strides in our knowledge about this period in Henry's reign were made by R. F. Treharne, *The Baronial Plan of Reform, 1258–63* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1932), by Carpenter, in his collected articles, and by Maddicott, in his *Simon de Montfort*. There is a useful (if idiosyncratic) collection of documents gathered, translated and commented upon by Treharne and edited by I. J. Sanders in *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973). Paul Brand, *Kings, Barons and Justices: The Making and Enforcement of*

Legislation on Thirteenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), has provided a critical text and translation of the Provisions of Oxford, along with their reissues in 1263 and 1264, and a text and translation of the Statute of Marlborough, 1267. He also provides a lucid, masterful and comprehensive study of the process of creating and enforcing legislation in the reign of Henry III and that of his successor, Edward I. The importance of the bishops in the crises of 1264 is made manifest by Sophie Ambler's 'The Montfortian Bishops and the Justification for Conciliar Government in 1264', *Historical Research*, 85 (2012), pp. 193–209, now added to by her equally important 'Magna Carta: Its Confirmation at Simon de Montfort's Parliament of 1265', *English Historical Review*, 130 (2015), pp. 801–30. The best introduction to the class of men who were to become vitally important in the reform movement and who would come to dominate England for the next eight hundred years is to be found in the profoundly important book by Peter Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Past and Present Society, 2003). The most recent narrative account of the period is A. Jobson's *The First English Revolution: Simon de Montfort, Henry III and the Barons' War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012). The best account of the Battles of Lewes and Evesham is in Carpenter's *The Battles of Lewes and Evesham, 1264/65* (Staffordshire: Mercian Publications, 1987), supplemented now by O. de Laborderie, J. R. Maddicott and D. A. Carpenter, 'The Last Hours of Simon de Montfort: A New Account', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), pp. 378–412. The aftermath of Evesham can still be profitably approached through E. F. Jacob's *Studies in the Period of Baronial Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1925) and C. H. Knowles's 'The Resettlement of England after the Barons' War, 1264–67', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 32 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society, 1982), pp. 25–41.

The most influential work of the last quarter of a century has been a collective one: the publications of the meetings of Thirteenth-Century England, which convenes every other year, the proceedings of which are published by Boydell & Brewer as *Thirteenth-Century England*. Inaugurated by Simon Lloyd and Peter Coss, the conference has provided an outlet for high-quality research, by younger as well as senior academics, on the thirteenth century, much of which was dominated by Henry III's reign. As well as articles by Carpenter, Maddicott and Ridgeway, there are pieces that give important new insights into aspects of Henry's life and reign, and which were used in the writing of this book. These essays include Ben Wild's 'A Captive King: Henry III between the Battles of Lewes and Evesham' (vol. 13,

2009); Carpenter's 'The Meetings of Kings Henry III and Louis IX' (vol. 10, 2005); Jessica Nelson's 'Scottish Queenship in the Thirteenth Century' and F. Lachaud's 'Ethics and Office in England in the Thirteenth Century' (vol. 11, 2005); and Stacey's 'Crusades, Crusaders, and the Baronial Gravamina of 1263–1264' (vol. 3, 1991). There are, of course, many other fine essays that the diligent should search out, which I have read with profit, but which were not cited directly in the final version of this book.

There are important studies of key individuals that the student of the period should not overlook. L. J. Wilkinson's *Eleanor de Montfort: A Rebel Countess in Medieval England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012) is not just a full biography of Henry III's sister, it is also an accomplished history of the period; Vincent's *Peter des Roches: An Alien in English Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) is comprehensive; his 'Étienne Langton: prédicateur, bibliste, théologien', in *Études réunies par Louis-Jacques Bataillon*, edited by N. Bériou, G. Dahan and R. Quinto (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010) – happily published in English despite its French title – supplements Powicke's magisterial *Stephen Langton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928); Vincent's 'Isabella of Angoulême: John's Jezebel', in *King John: New Interpretations*, edited by S. D. Church (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1999), pp. 165–219, is good on Isabella. There are many biographies of William Marshal that might be profitably consulted. The best is undoubtedly David Crouch's *William Marshal* (London: Routledge, 1990; 2nd edn, 2002; 3rd edn, 2016); N. Denholm-Young's *Richard of Cornwall* (New York: William Salloch, 1947) does not show its age and is still full of insight and erudition; C. Ellis, *Hubert de Burgh* (London: Phoenix House, 1952) – in concert with Carpenter's article 'The Fall of Hubert de Burgh', *Journal of British Studies*, 19 (1980), pp. 1–17, and reprinted in his *Reign of Henry III*, pp. 45–60 – is still of value; M. C. Prestwich's *Edward I* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990) is masterful; R. Vaughan's *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958) is an indispensable guide to our main narrative source; J. Sayers's *Papal Government in England During the Pontificate of Honorius III (1216–1227)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) is of fundamental importance. The Welsh dimension may be approached through J. B. Smith's *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998) and the Scottish dimension through A. A. M. Duncan's *The Edinburgh History of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975).

For Henry's interest in Westminster Abbey, the key publications are by Paul Binski, especially his *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200–1400* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995). Also of crucial importance is the

collection of essays in *Westminster Abbey Chapter House: The History, Art, and Architecture of 'A Chapter House Beyond Compare'*, edited by W. Rodwell and R. Mortimer (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2010), including articles by Carpenter and Binski and, especially important, by Laurence Keen on the decorated tiles on the floor of the Chapter House (pp. 209–36). Carpenter's 'King Henry III and Saint Edward the Confessor: The Origins of the Cult', *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007), pp. 865–91, shows when, why and how Henry's attraction to the cult of St Edward the Confessor developed. Crucial to understanding Henry's piety are Sally Dixon-Smith, 'The Image and Reality of Alms-giving in the Great Halls of Henry III', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 152 (1999), pp. 79–96, and Vincent's *The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). John Sabapathy's *Officers and Accountability in Medieval England 1170–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) gives an excellent insight into the morality of service.

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